SOME ASSAMESE PROVERBS.

COMPILED AND ANNOTATED

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INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE but few remarks to make by way of introduction ; the proverbs, which have in many cases been picked up from the mouths of the people, will speak for themselves. I do not wish to advance that the proverbs in themselves are specially interesting, but I trust to those who are acquainted with Assamese, or are interested in the Assamese, they may not be altogether without interest. The translations have been considerably revised since they were first made, and, in the revision, I am specially indebted to Mr. Abdul Majid, B.A., LL.B., Barrister-at-law, who is a native of Jorhát, for his very valuable help and suggestions. This collection does not pretend to be a collection from all the Assamese-speaking districts of the province ; it consists of only proverbs from Sibságar, Nowgong, and Gauháti ; hence the title "Some Assamese Proverbs."

I have a few remarks to make about the method of transliteration. Throughout আ (long ā) has been represented by an accented á ; অ (short a) is unaccented. I should, however, have preferred to have written the Assamese অ phonetically as "o", and in this I am supported by Mr. Melitus, although the latter remarks that it is usual to transliterate the Assamese অ as "a" on the analogy of Bengali, Hindi, and other languages derived from Sanskrit. If it had been transliterated "o," there would have been a difficulty about the transliteration of the letters ও and ঔ, although, perhaps, this might have been got over by transliterating the last two letters by "ō." This, however, would not have been strictly correct. It has not been thought necessary to distinguish ই from ঈ, the letter "i" being considered sufficient to represent both sounds. The long ঈ, moreover, being seldom met with in Assamese writing. In the same way the letters "u" and "o" have been used to denote উ—ঊ and ও—ঔ, respectively. In the above I have been guided by Sir W. Hunter's "Practical Guide to Transliteration." The proverbs have been classified, as far as possible, according to objects, not subjects, this being thought the best method after consideration.

Dhubri,
The 4th July 1895.

P. R. GURDON.

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Class I.

PROVERBS RELATING TO HUMAN FAILINGS, FOIBLES, AND VICES.

Proverbs relating to human failings, foibles, and vices—continued.

Proverbs relating to human failings, foibles, and vices—continued.

Sub-class.	No.	Subject of proverbs.
Greediness ...	23	He who was greedy, went to fetch a plantain leaf ; he who was not greedy, took his rice on the bare ground.
	24	He wants to eat much ; as regards work, he is lazy, but he wants an embroidered "dhoti."
	25	"Khoda" suddenly appeared whilst the three *mullahs* were watching the prize.
	26	Greedy rice-taker and mekela-bearer! I have kept the cooked rice ready ; take it.
Hitting a man when he is down.	27	Misery upon misery: the dog bites me, the boys pelt me; nowhere can happiness be got.
Hypocrisy ...	28	He stole an elephant, but on the road he detects some one stealing brinjals.
	29	People are becoming more impatient to get "akhoya" than "aroi."
	30	The guest wants salt with his vegetables, and the man who buys paddy looks out for a large "dun."
	31	What an impatient husband! He cannot even wait to be served with salt and pickle.
Inattention ...	32	If I tell him he is deaf, the spindle is in the spinning wheel.
	33	I talk about a revolution. He interrupts me, saying a bat has eaten the plantains.
Ignorance ...	34	He has not even got a pair of scales ; how does he know the essence of trade?
	35	He who does not know how to dance, finds the courtyard sloping.
	36	The disease has eaten at the nose of the doctor.

Proverbs relating to human failings, foibles, and vices—continued.

Sub-class.	No.	Subject of proverbs.
Improvidence ...	37	You lived in a way (before), but since you have taken to regally entertaining religious strangers, you have become much embarrassed.
	38	One who has nothing to cover his body with, drinks 3 "tekelis" of liquor.
	39	He has the mind and the mouth, but not the milk or the vessel to drink it from.
	40	The host expends his salt and oil, and is not able to cook the "micha" fish.
	41	He has no money in hand, yet his cravings are great.
Ingratitude ...	42	He cries "Ram" when in distress.
Laying traps for others.	43	He who lays thorns in the way of others, falls amongst them himself.
Love of false display.	44	There are many rosaries, the beads of which are not counted in devotion.
	45	He wishes, by all means, to take the lead having a turban on his head, although the lower part of his body is naked.
	46	If you meet him in the way, you see the folds of his large "dhoti." If you go to his house, you see the walls are worn out.
	47	The front shows a young man, but the back makes one weep.
	48	One having no cow for seven generations past, goes to milk with a "kariya."
	49	The dish is seven seers in weight, but the rice is of the day before. Fie on him who eats it. It is a shame to hear about it.
Lying ...	50	He had not a rag to cover himself with, and yet the little "maina" pulled off his clothes!

Proverbs relating to human failings, foibles, and vices—continued.

Proverbs relating to human failings, foibles, and vices—concluded.

Class II.

PROVERBS RELATING TO WORLDLY WISDOM AND MAXIMS, EXPEDIENCY AND CUNNING, AND WARNINGS AND ADVICE.

Sub-class.	No.	Subject of proverbs.
	76	Little work and much eating are the signs of a man becoming poor.
	77	I got weary of teaching a fool. I threw down the eggs and destroyed the nest.
	78	Have nothing whatever to do with these three things,—the honesty of the wicked, the bathing of a cattle-thief in the Ganges, the fasting of a wanton on the eleventh day of the moon.
	79	I have obtained it by begging, how can I give it to you—from my bowels?
	80	You wish to cut the wings of the unfledged nestling?
	81	In times of need, even an "owtenga" is welcome.
	82	Give according to the best of your ability. At any rate, say something nice.
	83	You can do what is unbecoming in evil times.
	84	He shot an arrow to a great height. The fisherman has seven wives, but only for one wife has he a bed.
	85	What does a ginger-seller want with news of the arrival of the vessel?
	86	Do one thing at a time; first of all cook the "kerela," then fry the brinjal.
	87	What the feathers are to the arrow, his art is to the wizard.

Proverbs relating to worldly wisdom and maxims, etc.—continued.

Proverbs relating to worldly wisdom and maxims, etc.—continued.

Sub-class.	No.	Subject of proverbs.
	102	A good horse can be recognized by its ears, a woman is tested in times of adversity, and a razor is tried on the whet-stone.
	103	When the "lopha" (a kind of vegetable) is stolen, the householder eats "chutney."
	104	The thief was attacked with colic, and the weaver was stung by a wasp.
	105	Can clouds be avoided by bending down?
	106	He who wishes to thrive roots up the weeds, even when sitting down.
	107	What herds and herds of brothers-in-law he has!
	108	What fault have I committed? I admit I am in the wrong, and give you a duck's egg.
	109	The light of a lamp before a torch!
	110	To sleep in the early morning is pleasant. A sharp knife is required to cut betelnut.
	111	He ate the "tenga" a long time ago, but he is blamed now.
	112	What is yours is mine, but what is mine can't be taken even by your father.
	113	The result of giving a place, is to hear grumbling.
	114	Instead of riding in a "dhooly," you will be carried slung on a pole—instead of milk you will drink water.
	115	All ten fingers are used in eating, but it is the thumb that pushes the food into the mouth.
	116	The sticks of ten men are a load to one person.

Proverbs relating to worldly wisdom and maxims, etc.—continued.

Sub-class.	No.	Subject of proverbs.
	117	The unlucky man goes to the wood, his knife breaks in two, and he is stung by a wasp.
	118	When the sloven becomes poor, his wife does not esteem him; when his friends meet him, they take no notice, fearing that they may have to lend him money.
	119	The "dheki" has become unsteady, the cup is broken. Has the drum gone away with the violin string?
	120	Each grain of paddy has its grain of rice; every person has his own character.
	121	Count money when you receive it, and tell the way only if you have seen the road.
	122	A bride of hell has rescued me from perdition.
	123	They cut off the tiger's tail, and let him loose in his haunt.
	124	From mentioning his name even, comes ill-luck; go and bolt the door.
	125	Laugh not at me, it will scratch you.
	126	Money got by unfair means, goes in expiations.
	127	When you have caught a bird, break its wings. Don't place on one side rice which is cooked.
	128	He who reads, he who teaches, he who sows *pán*, he who causes to sow *pán*; these four should not think of anything else.
	129	He learnt it by heart, and then a thief stole it away.
	130	They met the blacksmith by the wayside, and said to him make a *dao* for us.

Proverbs relating to worldly wisdom and maxims, etc.—continued.

Sub-class.	No.	Subject of proverbs.
	131	Thirteen scrapes in twelve months, I can't help getting into hot water.
	132	What passage-of-arms can there be between the strong and the weak? What amity can there be between the rich and the poor?
	133	"Bhogobanto" even flies through fear, and "Basudev" is alarmed lest he be beaten.
	134	It is good to eat bitter rice, but it is hard to hear bitter words.
	135	Good comes from good for all time.
	136	Which is sweeter—sweet words, or sweet food?
	137	Go to battle if you are summoned, but don't go to a feast if you are not invited.
	138	My son will have a daughter-in-law. He will catch me by the hair and throw me on the path.
	139	The uncle cuts wood, which his wife thinks as easy a task as drawing water.
	140	If I put my mind to it, I can find a way out of the difficulty.
	141	The shorter it is the more it tears.
The wearer knows where the shoe pinches.	142	The *Lohit* knows how deep the oar is dipped.
	143	It is all the same whether you kick him or call him father.
	144	In company one can go as far as Lanka even.
	145	When you are in a hurry, you can't get in a "jápi" into the knapsack.
	146	Children make up the house, sundries also serve the same purpose.

Proverbs relating to worldly wisdom and maxims, etc.—continued.

Sub-class.	No.	Subject of proverbs.
	147	Deal fairly with your equals, then you won't be ashamed whether you gain or lose.
	148	If a fly even falls into a toothless mouth, it is a gain.
	149	The kiss of love breaks the nose.
	150	If you find even fourteen annas of lost money, it is well.
	151	The hawk has taken the duckling, now we are equal.
	152	He who carries no jhápi, stick, or tanga, is blind even in the daytime.
	153	Look out as you move, for there are many holes in your own body, and you might slip into one of them.
	154	If you don't take pains, you won't fill your mouth.
	155	Labour alone fills the mouth, so the old folk say. Every one has heard this and seen it. It is not false.
	156	Two words in speaking, and two rounds in a fastening.
	157	It is the same whether you strike with the blunt or sharp edge.
	158	By weeping a debt is not paid.
	159	Like father, like son.
	160	Even with washing, charcoal does not become white.
	161	He who has no money is anxious in mind.
	162	Wherever there are kingdoms, there are duties to perform.

Proverbs relating to worldly wisdom and maxims, etc.—concluded.

Class III.

PROVERBS RELATING TO PECULIARITIES AND TRAITS CHARACTERISTIC OF CERTAIN CASTES AND CLASSES.

Proverbs relating to peculiarities and traits, etc —continued.

Sub-class.	No.	Subject of proverbs
Bhot ...	173	The rent-collector is the owner of the king's wealth.
Bhuiya ..	174	Let it be torn, let it be broken, it is still a scarf of fine silk. Let him be young, let him be old, he is still the son of a "Bhuiya."
Bora ...	175	In a Bora's house the walls are fastened with "tora"; how many nights will he live in it?
Brahmins ...	176	Brahmins and vultures look out for corpses, but *gonoks* watch from the time a person is taken ill.
	177	Is the ridge-pole of the Brahmin's house made out of a bamboo?
	178	I was combing my beard. He brought me here calling me Brahmin.
Mahang ...	179	His wealth has gone to the Mahang, so he threw down his load of salt and brought one of earth, and began to plaster his house.
Miri ...	180	When the Miri meets his wife, he beats her.
Mohant ...	181	The traces of the Mohant are to be found in the "matikolai" field; those of the old bullock in the meadow.
Moria ...	182	Why should a Moria have paddy or a Mussalman (Goria) ears?
Nágas ...	183	The Nága's wife is brought to bed, but the Nága drinks the medicine.
Thieves ...	184	The stock in trade of a thief is his appearance.
	185	My father was a thief; I also am of the same persuasion.
	186	A couple, a good couple. One has cropped ears, the other is a thief.

Class IV.

PROVERBS RELATING TO SOCIAL AND MORAL SUBJECTS, RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS, AND POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS.

Proverbs relating to social and moral subjects, etc.—continued.

Proverbs relating to social and moral subjects, etc.—continued.

Proverbs relating to social and moral subjects, etc.—continued.

Sub-class.	No	Subject of proverbs.
Step-son ...	222	You are not my son, but a son of my fellow-wife. I have no *dhari* (rug) and no *pati* (bed); you must sleep on the ground.
Stolen cattle ...	223	Stolen cattle find grass along the road.
Teacher ...	224	What sort of a teacher is he, for when he finds a companion he sings hymns and lights a grass-fire?
Urbashi ...	225	The temple of Urbashi has but one door and passage.
Village conversation	226	Bits of fern—he drinks water when he eats rice: these are the subjects of conversation.
Water-sprite ...	227	The digging of the ditch has brought the water-sprite nearer.
	228	A king reigns on land, but in the tank the water-sprite.
Widower ...	229	The torch burnt down to the widower's hand.
	230	He is all by himself a "Madangopal," a widower; he possesses nine courtyards.
	231	To look for turtle's eggs in the hills, or to set a fish-trap in the plains, are as difficult things as for a widower to get dry paddy.
Wife ...	232	I ask for acid and she gives me salt, who will remain under such provocation?

Proverbs relating to social and moral subjects, etc.—continued.

Class V.

PROVERBS RELATING TO AGRICULTURE AND SEASONS.

Proverbs relating to agriculture and seasons—continued.

Sub-class.	No.	Subject of proverbs.
	257	The whole season of Máh went in sharpening the ploughshare.
	258	Do you find a "seluk" at every dive?
	259	When the bór tree was cut down, it fell with a loud noise and the juice poured out. Before people speak to him sharply, inwardly you should feel for him kindly.
	260	The kerela is twelve hâts long, but the seeds are thirteen hâts long.
	261	Buy land which slopes towards the centre, and marry a girl whose mother is good.
	262	Look at your paddy cultivation in the evening, look for your cattle in the morning, look at the girl fishing with the jokai, and see what she is like.
	263	It is harder to sow the plot that was left uncultivated before, than to sow the whole of the rest of the field.
	264	A fence always requires looking after.
	265	Place cowdung round the black pepper bush, and earth round the pán, and cut the plantain three times before you plant it.
	266	When you plant sáli, you must make the ális as near to one another as possible. If the sáli does not grow well, then abuse the rake.
	267	A house with a tamarind tree in front, and an owtenga behind, has not the owner of that house gone away from here yet?
	268	Seeing the matikalai beaten out, the sesamum opened its cane-fastening.
	269	The best crops are on the fields of others. The best sons are those at home.

Class VI.

PROVERBS RELATING TO CATTLE AND ANIMALS AND INSECTS

Sub-class.	No.	Subject of proverbs.
	270	When fish are too plentiful, the paddy-bird is blind.
	271	The jackal fell into the dye-pot and got coloured.
	272	In a bad place the foot of even the elephant slips.
	273	The mosquito under the mosquito net is crushed to death.
	274	The mosquito. It has a trunk, but it is not an elephant. It bites men and cattle, but it is not a tiger. Whatever it eats, it eats on the spot.
	275	The little dove has flown away, the fish-eagle has chased it away; with one arrow it has been pierced in seven places, this thing also is like that.
	276	A mouse has seven pâms.
	277	A man who has once been bitten by a snake, is afraid of every piece of rope on the ground.
	278	Near us we have the púthi and the khalihona, but the "ro" and the "borali" are far away.

Proverbs relating to cattle and animals and insects—continued.

Sub-class.	No.	Subject of proverbs.
	279	The duck that has been bought has flesh right up to the beak.
	280	What a time! A time for the contrary to happen: the deer licks the tiger's cheek.
	281	You need not see a tiger look for a tomcat. If you want to see gentlemen, go to the road.
	282	I laid a good bait for the tiger, for I killed a deer and placed it in front of it.
	283	Having got nothing, he found a bhadoi and squeezed it into the fish basket.
	284	The kaisálu having eaten, climbed up on to the bough. The person who licked the wood, died.
	285	The dog is the enemy of the man who begs for scraps.
	286	To the ant a few drops of rain is a flood; a single slap is too much for a toothless mouth.
	287	The bird is small, but it builds its nest in the hụlúng tree.
	288	Obviously a situl, see the bones in its back.
	289	The monkey also looks handsome when it is full-grown.

Proverbs relating to cattle and animals and insects—concluded.

Sub-class.	No.	Subject of proverbs.
	290	The squirrel eats the widow's betelnut. If she gives me the tree, I know it will grow crooked.
	291	In the hand of the old man is the sengeli.
	292	Good horses even are not getting grass, but inferior ones are looking out for máh.
	293	On the horns of the buffalo is the snout of the "kokila."
	294	A game-cock dies in battle.
	295	You will be able to recognise a king by his liberality, an elephant when it is another's, a horse by its ears.
	296	The house sparrow in trying to imitate the gait of the goose, has forgotten its own.
	297	Why does a tadpole require warm water?
	298	The sál laughs at the singi. I am a girl and you are a girl, but no good husband comes for either of us.
	299	Whether a man was bitten by a snake or eaten by a tiger, it is the same thing—he has met his fate.
	300	Don't give a dog a place; and don't spoil children.
	301	What does a dog know of the value of copper vessels or of the tulsi?

SOME ASSAMESE PROVERBS.

Class I.

PROVERBS RELATING TO HUMAN FAILINGS, FOIBLES, AND VICES.

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1. *Anger, affectation, boasting, conceit, etc.*

কি নো ভমকৰ তালি, ভাল খন থৈ ফটা খন পালি।

Ki no bhamakar táli, bhál khan thoi phatá khan páli.

What a repetition of anger, you have put down the good one and picked up the torn one.

This is addressed to a person who is in a great rage, and who is so angry that he puts down the good cloth he has in his hand, and takes up a torn one instead.

ভমক (bhamak) signifies the sudden rising of anger. It is also applied to a fire which suddenly blazes up.

2.

কোপ দাঙ্গ ধান নাই কিয়া স্থদা চাঙ্গ।

Kop dáng dhán nái kiya shudá cháng.

Don't be angry, the paddy is spent and the "cháng" is empty.

কোপ (kop) is equivalent to খঙ্গ (anger). দাঙ্গ (dáng) literally means lift up. নাই কিয়া (nái kiyá) literally is not. চাঙ্গ (cháng) is the platform inside the ভৰাল (bharál) or granary.

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3. *Over-anxiety about trifles.*

পাহৰি আচিলো পৰিল মনত,
পাঁচ বৰনিয়া পতা আছে ৰাৱনৰ ঘৰত।

Páhari áchilo paril manat,
Pánch baraniyá patá áche ráwnar gharat.

I had forgotten it, and then I remembered,
It was a five-coloured leaf in the house of Ráwan.

The word পতা (patá) is sometimes used to indicate gold leaf. Apparently, this is the sense intended here. ৰাৱন (Ráwan) was the mythical king of Ceylon.

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4. *Affectation.*

ৰহৰ ৰহদৈ, তিপামৰ ভাদৈ, সলগুৰিৰ আঘনি বাই,
তিনিওৰ দিঙ্গিত ধৰি তিনিয়ে কান্দিচে, সমন্ধৰ বাল গচ নাই।

Rahar Rahdoi, Tipámar Bhádoi, Salagurir Ághani bái,
Tinior dingit dhari tiniye kándiche, shamandhar bál gach nai.

Rahdoi from Raha, Bhádoi from Tipám, sister Ághani from Salaguri,
Are all three weeping on each other's necks and embracing,
although there is not the least relationship amongst them.

Raha is in the Nowgong district, Tipam, or Namti, is close to Sibságar. Salaguri is also in Sibságar.

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5. *Boasting.*

নগই গড়গাৱঁৰ বতৰা কয়।

Nagoi Garga(n)or batará koy.

He tells the news of Gargaon without having gone there.

A man tells the news of the court without ever having been to it. Gargaon was formerly the capital of the Ahom kings, or rather was one of their capitals.

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6. *Boasting.*

সাগৰত আচিল পঞ্চ জলা সংখ্য,
নেগুৰিয়া সামুকে কলেময়ো তাৰে বংস।

Shágarat áchil pancha jalá shangkha,
Neguriá shámuke kale maio táre bangsha.

There were five sacred shells in the ocean.
The shámuk with a tail said "I am related to them."

The shámuk is a shell-fish, which is found in almost every marsh or "bil." Its shell is in appearance very like a snail shell. It is useless as an article of food, except to the সামুক ভঙ্গা (shámúk bhanga), which is a species of heron that cracks the shells with its strong beak. Lime is, however, made from the shells in

considerable quantities, and is sold and bought by the poor to eat with "tamul" (betelnut). The জলা সংখ্য (jalá shangkha) are the large conch shells which are blown by the priests at festivals, and are also used by them for pouring out libations to the gods. The জলা সংখ্য (jalá shangkha), which are of considerable size, are marine shells ; they are considered by Hindus to be sacred. The meaning of the proverb is obvious.

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7. *Boasting.*

একো লৈ নমৰো, জহলৈ মৰো,
ফতা আঠুৱা খান তিঙ্গালি কৈ তৰো।

Eko loi namaro, jahaloi maro,
Phatá áthuwá khán tingáli koi taro.

Nothing causes my death except fire.
I hang my mosquito curtain in an irregular manner.

This means I risk my life to win fame, and not for anything else. I go so far as to hang up a torn mosquito curtain above my bed, rather than that people should think I am too poor to buy one.

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8. *Blaming others for one's own fault.*

নকলেও নোৱাৰো ফটা মুখ,
কলেও লাগে ভকতৰ দোষ।

Nakaleo noáwro phatá mukh,
Kaleo láge bhakatar dosh.

There is an opening in the mouth, and I can't help speaking.
If I do speak, the blame will fall on the "bhakat."

A very lame excuse. ভকত (bhakat) means a disciple of a gosain or priest.

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9. *Conceit.*

জুঝিবলৈ আহিলে মাল,
দুই হাতে চিঙ্গিলে বাল।

Jujhibaloi áhile mál,
Dui háte singile bál.

He came to fight in all his strength,
But he only broke one hair (of his adversary).

This proverb applies to the man who is over-conceited about his capabilities. The word মাল (mál) more properly means a boxer or wrestler.

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10. *Counting one's chickens before they are hatched—Discontent and exaggeration.*

গছত কঠাল ওঠত তেল,
নো খাওতেই মেল বেল।

Gachat kathál othat tel,
No kháotei mel bel.

Rubbing the lips with oil
While the jack fruit is still on the tree.

ওঠত তেল (othat tel) means on the lips oil. The jack fruit, if eaten without putting oil on the lips, causes sores. There is a Hindi proverb exactly similar to the Assamese. It is (gach par kothal hónth men tél). Clearly this is an instance of counting one's chickens before they are hatched.

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11. *Discontent.*

লহু বাকলীৰ চাল,
সাতোটা সুখৰ এটা,
নেপালো, ঢেকি টোও
নেপালো ভাল।

Lahu bákalír chál,
Shátotá shukhar etá,
Nepálo, dheki to o
Nepálo bhál.

A covering of blood and skin.
I did not find one of the seven happinesses,
And I did not find even the dheki (rice-husking machine) nice.

A complaint of a woman, who is discontented with her lot. She did not find even the "dheki" any comfort. To work the "dheki," is one of the hardest household duties.

12. *Exaggeration.*

একে কাঠি কাৰে সাতোটা সীংহক মাৰিলো,
লোকক নকলো লাজে,
চমাহ্ খাপ দি নিগনি এটা মাৰিলে তাতে,
ধনজয় ঢোল বাজে।

Eke káthi káre shátotá shínghok márilo(n),
Lokok nakalo(n) láje,
Chamáh kháp dı nigonı eta márile táte,
Dhanjoy dhol báje.

With one arrow I killed seven lions,
I was too shy to tell any one;
But he, after lying in wait for six months, killed a mouse,
At that I see the drum of victory beaten.

The ধনজয় (dhanjay) was a large drum which used to be beaten by the Ahoms when they gained a victory. The "dhanjoy" was of a particular shape and of large size. An illustration of it is given by Montgomery Martin in his book. Mr. Abdul Majid gives another reading "দহোজয় ঢোলবাজে" (dahojay dhol báje), দহো (daho) being equivalent to দহ্ (dah) ten. The translation, therefore, would be "I see ten drums of victory beaten." A man who brags is met by this saying.

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13. *Exaggeration.*

কথা কলেই লাগিল পাক,
বাৰে জনি গৈছিল পানী আনিবলৈ,
তেৰ জনীৰ কাতিলে নাক।

Kathá kalei lágil pák,
Báre jani goichil pání ánibaloi,
Tera janír kátile nák.

If I say, a fault is found with my story,
Twelve girls went to fetch water,
The noses of thirteen were slit.

লাগিল পাক (lágil pák) literally a turn or twist has occurred. কাতিলে নাক (kátile nák) they cut the noses. It was a common punishment to slit the nose in the days of the rájas. The proverb points to the growth of a story, or probably in this case, scandal, by being repeated.

14. *Exaggeration.*

জাপ মাৰি দেহিচিলো ঢাপলিকা পৰ্ব্বত ।
তিলিকিত মাৰিচিলো বগ ।
খেদা মাৰি ধৰিচিলো মতা হৰিনা ।
এতিয়া নেপাও মতা হাঁহৰ লগ ।

Jáp mári dehichilo Dhápaliká parbat.
Tilikit márichilo bag.
Khedá mári dharichilo matá hariná.
Etiyá nepáo matá há(n)har lag.

I used to be able to jump over the Dhápaliká hill.
I killed the paddy-bird in an instant.
I chased a stag and caught him.
Now I can't even catch up a drake.

ঢাপলিকা পৰ্ব্বত is a low range of hills. ঢাপলিকা also is used to express a screen usually made of thatching-grass. This screen, which is sometimes called পাৰলি (párali), is used for watching crops and for guarding them from wild animals. বগ is short for বগলা or বগলি (bagla or bagli), the common paddy-bird. তিলিকিত or তিলেকত literally, at a snap of the fingers, and so it comes to mean instantly.

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15. *Exaggeration.*

তিলকে তাল কৰিলে ।

Tilake tál karile.

He made a palm tree out of a mole.

The Assamese version of "to make a mountain out of a molehill." তিলক is a freckle or mole. তাল is the fan-palm or palmyra tree. In this proverb apparently তাল has nothing to do with the clapping of hands together, or cymbals.

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16. *Exaggeration.*

ধনৰ নৰিযা টান,
ভাত খাইচে উধানৰ মান ।

Dhanar nariyá tán,
Bhát kháiche udhánar mán.

Shamming illness.
Dhan's illness is very serious,
But he eats a pile of rice as big as an udhán.

উধান is a large clod of earth. Three such clods are used to support the cooking pot.

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17. *Exaggeration.*

নুচুই ডুমুনি তুলি দিলে বোঝা,
নপড়ী নুশুনি হল ওজা।

Nuchui dumuni tuli dile bojhá,
Napaṛí nushuni hal ojá.

The fish-wife lifted up the load without polluting it,
Without study he became a magician.

This proverb is meant ironically. According to Assamese ideas, it would be impossible for a "Dúm" woman to touch anything without defiling it. The "Dúm" caste in Assam appears to be considered of equally low status as in Bengal. ওজা (ojá) means a teacher of arts, magician, exorcist. It is in its last sense that ওজা is most frequently used, particularly amongst the semi-civilised and more ignorant people. Brian Hodgson gives an interesting account of "ojás" on page 138 of his Collection of Essays.

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18. *Exaggeration.*

নকটা খেৰৰ ন স।

Nakatá kherar na sha.

Uncut grass has nine bodies.

The longer a man puts off cutting his খেৰ (kher) or thatching-grass, the greater does the task appear, and the longer the grass becomes, the harder it is to cut.

---

19. *Exaggeration.*

বাল চিঙ্গোতে মোহা মৰিল,
মই বোলো মহা ৰনত হে পৰিল।

Bál chingote mohá maril,
Moi bolo mahá ranat he paril.

In scratching a mosquito was killed,
I say it fell in a severe engagement.

---

20. *Exaggeration.*

সজনৰ লগত সজ সঙ্গতি।
মুধত কৰিলো পান,
বিক্ৰমাদিত্যৰ মুৰত উঠি
গঙ্গাত কৰিলো স্নান।

Shajanar lagat shaj shangati,
Mudhat karilo pán,
Bikramádityar murat uthi
Gangát karilo snan.

Good associates with good.
I have drunk on the ridge of the roof of the house ;
Have mounted on the head of Bikramáditya
And have bathed in the Ganges.

সজ is pure, good, excellent. মুধ is the ridge of the roof of the house. Bikramáditya was the name of a Hindu king. Apparently, the first line is inserted for purposes of rhyme. The meaning of this proverb is not very clear, but apparently it is meant to convey the idea of vain boasting.

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21. *False excuses.*

হাৰ নাই কিয়া জিবা,
কয় কিবা কিবা।

Hár nái kiyá jibá,
Koy kibá kibá.

The tongue because it has no bone,
Says various things.

A poor excuse made by a man when he says more than he ought. He does not admit the blame, but throws it on his tongue, which, he says, is easily pliable, because it is unsupported by bone.

cf.—The modern Greek proverb (*translation*).—" The tongue has no bones, yet it breaks bones," and also the Turkish proverb (*translation*)—" The tongue has no bone, yet it crushes."

22. *False pride and over-sensitiveness.*

কাৰ আগত কম কোনে পতিয়াব,
জাৰ আগত কম সেইয়ে লথিয়াব।

Kár ágat kam kone patiába,
Jár ágat kam sheiye lathiyába.

Before whom shall I speak, who will believe?
To whoever I say it he will kick me.

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23. *Greediness.*

খুকৱা গল পাত কাটিবলৈ,
নিখুকৱাই মাটিতে খালে।

Khukaá gal pát kátibaloi,
Nikhukuái mátite khále.

The greedy went to cut a plantain-leaf,
He who was not greedy ate on the ground.

Perhaps ironically meant.

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24. *Greediness.*

খাবলৈ যম যম বনলৈ গৰিয়া,
পিন্ধিবলৈ লাগে তাক আচুৱালি চুৰিয়া।

Khábaloi jam jam banaloi gariyá,
Pindhibaloi láge ták áchuáli churiyá.

He is a great hand at eating, but he is like a bullock as regards work,
And he requires an embroidered "dhoti" to wear.

যম যম—In eating he is like "Jam" (the god of death), *i.e.*, he has an insatiable appetite. I give the following quotation from Dowson :

" 'Jom' or 'Jam' is 'Yáma,' the Pluto of the Hindus. Yáma is described as being the son of the Sun by Senjna (conscience), and brother of Vaivaswate (Manu). Mythologically, he was the father of Yudishthira. He is the god of departed spirits and judge of the dead. A soul, when it quits its mortal form, repairs to his abode in the lower regions; there the recorder, Chitra-Gupta, reads

out his account from the great register called Agra-Sandháni, and a just sentence follows, when the soul either ascends to the abodes of the Pitris (manes), or is sent to one of the twenty-one hells according to his guilt, or it is born again on earth in another form. Yáma is regent of the south quarter, and, as such, is called Dakshin-pati. He is represented as of a green colour, and is armed with a ponderous mace, and a noose to secure his victims."—(*Dowson.*)

গৰিয়া may mean either like a bullock (গৰু) or a Musalman, who are named Gariyás by the Hindus, because the former originally came from Gaur (Bengal). Gariyá has lately been considered an opprobrious epithet. I don't know why. I see Bronson gives this meaning to Gariyá, *i.e.*, "an ox that won't work." Literally, Gariyá means like an ox or one that requires driving, and so it comes to mean lazy. আচুৱালি (áchuwáli) means a cloth embroidered with আচু (áchu) or red thread. The colour is obtained from the root of a tree called আচুকৰি (áchukari).

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25. *Greediness.*

তিনি মোল্লা টো থাকিলে চাই,
খোদাই টো ওলাল হি ভোৰোকাই।
Tini mollá to thákile chái,
Khodai to olál hi bharakái.

Whilst the three mollás were watching,
Their god suddenly appeared.

I am told that this means that the three mollás were watching the feast being prepared, when their god appeared ; but this proverb might mean anything. The Assamese Muhammadan has a feast on every possible occasion, the feast being prepared in a house adjoining the house of prayer. খোদা is, of course, not an Assamese word, but the Arabic (khodá) for God.

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26. *Greediness.*

ভাতৰ ভতুৱা মেকেলা ভাৰি,
ভাত বাঢ়ি ঠৈচো খোৱাহি আহি।
Bhátar bhatuá mekelá bhári,
Bhát bári thoicho khoáhi áhi

Greedy rice-eater and mekelá-bearer,
I have prepared and served up the rice, come and eat it.

This is addressed by some one to a greedy dependent. ভতুৱা and মেকেলা ভাৰি are both terms of reproach. The first means one who is fond of ভাত (rice), and the second means one who carries a মেকেলা (mekelá), a garment worn by women.

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27. *Hitting a man when he is down.*

দুখৰ উপৰত দুখ,
কুকুৰে কামোৰে,
চৰালে ডুলিযাই,
কত নিমিলিলে সুখ।

Dukhar uparat dukh,
Kukure kámore,
Charále duliái,
Kata nimilile sukh.

Misery upon misery,
The dogs bite me,
The (boys) have slapped me and pelted me,
Nowhere have I found rest.

This is the cry of a beggar who is thus treated.

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28. *Hypocrisy, impatience, inattention, ignorance.*

হাতি চুৰ কৰি জাই বাতে বাতে,
বেঙ্গেনা চোৰক ধৰে,
নাকটো কাতিলে লাজ নেলাগে,
নখটো কাতিলে মৰে।

Háti chur kari jái báte báte,
Bengená chorak dhare,
Nákto kátile láj neláge,
Nakhto kátile mare.

The elephant is stolen on the roadside,
He catches a man who has stolen brinjals,
If his nose is cut off, he is not ashamed,
But if you pare his nails, he dies (of grief).

The proverb describes one who is a thorough hypocrite.

29. *Hypocrisy, impatience, inattention, ignorance.*

আৰৈতকৈ উখুৱাৰ
খচ খচনি টান।

Ároitkoi ukhuwár
Khach khachani tán.

People are more impatient to get ukhuwár than ároi (now-a-days).

খচ খচনি means an itching, burning sensation. আৰৈ is rice obtained from new paddy. উখুৱাৰ is rice obtained from old paddy, the husk of which has to be boiled first before the rice is separated from the shell.

30. *Hypocrisy, impatience, inattention, ignorance.*

আলহিয়ে বিচাৰে সাকত লোন,
ধান কিনাৰ বিচাৰে দাঙ্গাৰ দোন।

Álahiye bichåre shákat lon,
Dhán kinár bichåre dángár don.

The guest looks out for salt in his vegetables;
The paddy-buyer searches for a large "don."

In the old days salt was a luxury, and was therefore much appreciated. The "don" is a measure of capacity, and varies in size according to locality. It is supposed to contain five seers weight.

31. *The impatient husband.*

কি পৈ হতাই তাই
লোন খৰিচা
দিবৰ তত নাই।

Ki poi hatái tái
Lon kharichá
Dibar tat nái.

What an impatient husband!
He cannot even wait to be served with salt and pickle.

I am not quite certain about the meaning of হতাই তাই, but I am told that here it means impatient. খৰিচা is a pickle made from the young shoots of the bamboo, and is eaten with boiled rice. It is much esteemed.

32. *Inattention.*

কওঁতেই কলা, জতৰতে সলা।

Ko(n)tei kalá, jatarate shalá.

If I tell him he is deaf, the spindle is in the spinning wheel.

"There are none so deaf as those who won't hear."

---

33. *Inattention.*

মই কও ৰাজ ভগনৰ কথা,
সি কয় কল থোকা বাদুলিয়ে খালে।

Moi ko ráj bhaganar kathá,
Shi koi kal thoká báduliye khále.

I talk about a revolution;
He interrupts me, saying, a bat has eaten the bunch of plantains.

ৰাজ ভগন literally means the breaking up of a kingdom.

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43 *Ignorance.*

জাৰ নাই তৰ্জ তুল,
সি কি জানে বানিজৰ মুল।

Jár nái tarja tul,
Shi ki jáne bánijar mul.

He who has not a pair of scales,
What does he know of the essence of trade?

মুল literally root, origin, source.

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35. *Ignorance.*

"An unskilful workman quarrels with his tools."

নাচিব নাজানে চোতাল
খন হেৰেম গৰিয়া।

Náchiba najáne chotál
Khan herem gariyá.

He who does not know how to dance,
(Finds) the floor of the courtyard sloping.

হেৰেম পৰিবা is usually applied only to land which is not level ; perhaps the better reading is বেকা (beká), which is the usual Assamese word for crooked. It is interesting to compare Christian's Bihar proverb, which is almost identical (náche na jánin ánganwen terh). The meaning is the same.

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36. *Ignorance.*

বেজৰ নাকত খৰে খালে।

Bejar nákat khare khále.

The disease has eaten at the nose of the doctor.

This not very elegant proverb means that the doctor caused the disease by his ignorance. The বেজ (bej) is like the kabiráj of India, a quack doctor. The "bej" makes more use of "mantras" and charms than medicines ; and, although he sometimes knows a little about the medicinal qualities of certain roots and plants, his knowledge is a source of considerable danger to his patients ; cases having been known of poisoning by a dose of the "bej's" medcine. খৰ is dysentery, although the word গ্ৰহণি is perhaps more frequently used to denote this disease. খৰ is also a skin disease.

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37. *Improvidence.*

আগৈ আছিলে জেন তেন,
ভকতক ভুজাবৰ পৰা হল পেন পেন।

Ágoi áchile jen ten,
Bhakatak bhujábar pará hal pen pen.

You used to live before after a fashion,
But since you have taken to entertaining "bhakats,"
you have become very poor.

পেন পেন generally refers to the fact of a man being involved in debt and difficulty, the usual phrase being ধাৰেৰে পেন পেনিয়া হল (dhárere pen peniyá hal) became involved in debt. Perhaps the proverb explodes the idea of the good effects of entertaining "bhakats." The latter have very considerable appetites, as the saying কনি পাড়ে হাহে খাই ভকত দাহে (kani páṛe háhe khái bhakat

dahe) shows. The above means that, as soon as the ducks lay eggs, the " bhakats " eat them up.

38. *Improvidence.*

গাত নাই চাল বাকলি,
মদ খাই তিন টেকেলি।

Gát nái chál bákali,
Mad khái tin tekeli.

He has nothing to cover himself with,
But he drinks three pots of rice-beer.

চাল literally skin. মদ is লাও পানি (láo páni) or the Bengali " pachwai," which is a liquor fermented from boiled rice. মদ is largely drunk by the aboriginal people of Assam—Kacharis, Ahoms, Miris and Deoris are particularly fond of it. It is not an unpleasant drink when fresh, its taste being a bitterish sub-acid. Hodgson gives the following description of how the Bodo (Kachiri) brews it :—" The grain is boiled ; the root of a plant called 'agaichito' is mixed with it ; it is left to ferment for two days in a nearly dry state ; water is then added *quantum sufficit ;* the whole stands for three or four days, and the liquor is ready. In Goálpára the 'borá mad,' which is the 'mad' of the Rabhas, is a fermented liquor made from 'bora dhán.' The following ingredients also are added :—leaves of the jack tree, leaves of a plant called 'Bhatai tita,' and long pepper. The Assamese 'mad' is very similar in taste to the Nága 'zú,' although the former is perhaps preferable."

The proverb applies to an extravagant drunkard. Christian gives a Bihar saying, which it is interesting to quote, because it expresses the same idea, *i.e.*, (máúr na jure tári)="He cannot afford rice gruel, yet he drinks toddy !"

39. *Improvidence.*

মনে মুখে আছে মহৰ গাখিৰে কাঁহৰ বাতিয়ে নাই।

Mane mukhe áche mahar gákhire káhar bátiye nái.

He has the mind and mouth, but not the vessel to drink buffalo milk from.

40. *Improvidence.*

সচি গৃহস্থৰ লোন তেল বয়,
মিচাৰ বাকলি নে জাই ক্ষয়।

Shachi grihashtar lon tel boy,
Michár bákali ne jái khoi.

The oil and salt of the host flow like water,
But the skin of the prawn is not rubbed off.

The proverb means that the host is an unthrifty man, who expends all his salt and oil before he commences to cook the মিচা or prawn. সচি generally refers to water used for other than culinary purposes. মিচা is the fresh-water prawn or "chingari." ক্ষয় means decay, waste, loss, or destruction, but when used in Assamese, as here, with the verb জাবলৈ, it means to wear off.

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41. *Improvidence.*

হাতত নাই বিৎ
মনে কৰে পিত পিত।

Hátat nái bit
Mane kare pit pit.

He has no money in hand,
But his cravings are great.

পিত literally gall, bile. বিৎ literally wealth, substance.

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42. *Ingratitude.*

টান পালে ৰাম বোলে।
Tán pále Rám bole.

When in distress, a man calls on Ráma.

This proverb is not confined to Assam. There is a similar one in Bengali, and probably in Hindi. The proverb means that in times of prosperity, there is a want of gratitude to Ráma; it is only in times of distress that a man calls on his god.

43. *Laying pitfalls for others.*

কোতাৰ ঘৰৰ কুটি,
লোকলৈ বুলি হুল পাতি,
আপুনি মৰে ফুটি।

Kotár gharar kuti,
Lokaloi buli hul páti,
Ápuni mare phuti.

He who lays thorns for others,
Dies amongst them himself.

The first line means nothing, and is merely inserted for purposes of rhyme. ফুটি (phuti) literally means pierced, or rather burst asunder.

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44. *Love of false display.*

পালিব নোৱাৰা ৰুদ্ৰাখৰ জোটাজাত।

Páliba noáurá rudrákhyar jotáját.

There are many rosaries, the beads of which are not told in devotion.

The proverb means that rosaries are as often as not worn for show as for devotional purposes. ৰুদ্ৰাক্ষ is the seed of a certain tree. The seeds are bored through and strung together to make rosaries. জোটাজাত literally telling, from জোতোৱা, to join together.

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45. *Love of false display.*

পোকৰত নাই মুৰত পাগ,
সি হয় দেহতৰ আগ।

Pokarat nái murat pág,
Shi hai dehatar ág.

With a *págri* on his head,
And with nothing on the lower part of his body,
he wishes take the lead.

The Assamese thinks if he puts on a turban, this is a mark of respectability, and he will be thought a ভাল মানুহ (bhál mánush) or respectable person. পাগ is short for পাগুৰি।

46. *Love of false display.*

বাটত চোৱা যদি বৰ চুৰিয়াৰ ফেৰ,
ঘৰত জোৱা যদি ঢোকাৰ বেৰ ।

Bátat chowá jadi bar churiyár pher,
Gharat jowá jadi dhokár ber.

If you meet him in the road, see the folds of his dhoti.
If you go to his house, (see) the walls are all propped up.

Another proverb with a meaning very similar to the last—"The man puts on fine clothes to go out walking, but his house is toppling down." The "dhoti" worn by the ভাল মানুহ (bhál mánush) has as many yards of stuff in it as it is possible to walk in. ঢোকা literally means a prop, stay, support, and so comes to mean the propping of anything. A range of hills that fronts another, and higher range of hills behind it, is called ঢোকা পৰ্ব্বত (dhoká parbat).

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47. *Love of false display.*

মুখলৈ চালে বৰ ডেকা,
পোকৰলৈ চালে কন্দাকটা ।

Mukhaloi chále bar deká,
Pokaraloi chále kandákatá.

The front view shows a fine young man,
But the back is a sight for tears.

Another proverb conveying the same meaning as 44 and 45.

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48. *Love of false display.*

সাত পুৰুষত নাই গাই,
কৰিয়ালৈ খিৰাবলৈ যাই ।

Shát purushat nái gái,
Kariyá loi khirábaloi jái.

His family had no cow for seven generations,
But he takes a "kariyá" and goes a milking.

The proverb means that the man's forefathers were too poor to be able to keep any cows; but when he gets one cow, he makes

a great show of going to milk with a "kariyá" or milkpan. কৰিয়া is really a bamboo chungá. The bamboo is cut about a foot above a joint, and the hollow portion inside serves to hold the liquid. Milk is generally carried in such chungás, and they are generally used for milking.

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49. *Love of false display.*

সাত সেৰিয়া কাহি খুদ চাউলৰ ভাত,
খোৱাৰ যে ধিক ধিক শুনাৰো লাজ ।
Shát sheriyá káhi khud cháólar bhát,
Khowár je dhik dhik shunáro láj.

The dish is of seven seers weight, but the meal of cooked rice is the leavings of the day before.
Fie on him who eats it. It is a shame even to hear about it.

A কাহি is a metal dish; such dishes are sold according to weight of metal. A seven-seer dish would be an expensive one. খুদ is the refuse of rice, or broken grains, left in the dish after eating, that is to say, the leavings of the day before.

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50. *Lying and exaggeration.*

গাত নাই কানি, চুটা হালিকাই নিলে টানি ।
Gát nái káni, chutá hálikái nile táni.

Although he had not a rag on his body, the little maina pulled off his clothes.

This is a proverb from Gauháti, which accounts for the word চুটা, being used a corruption of the Bengali ছোট (chota). In the Kámrúp district, a mixture of Bengali and Assamese is spoken, which is called ঢেকেৰি (dhekeri) by the Assamese of Central and Upper Assam. In Jorhát, চুটা would not be used, but সৰু (sharu). হালিকা, or more properly সালিকা, is the ordinary "maina" of India. There is, however, in Assam also the more handsome species —the hill maina, which can be taught to talk extremely well.

51. *Meddling.*

এঘৰৰ পাট নাদ এঘৰৰ জৰি,
এঘৰে পানি তোলে ঘতং মতং কৰি ।

Egharar pát nád egharar jari,
Eghare páni tole ghatang matang kari.

The well belongs to one house, the rope to another,
A third house has drawn the water making a great clatter.

A busy-body interfering in other people's affairs. পাট নাদ is a boarded-up well, or a well with its sides earthed-up and plastered. ঘতং মতং is a word derived from the sound of two things, dashing one up against the other. The Assamese are fond of using such onomatopœic words.

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52. *Oppression of others.*

যি কৰে পৰত, তাক মিলে ঘৰত ।

Ji kare parat, ták mile gharat.
Do as you would be done by.

Literally, whatever he does to others, he gets the same at home.

---

53. *Out of sight, out of mind.*

লোকৰ পৰা অন্তৰ হলে সি মোৰ পোৰোহিত ।

Lokar pará antar hale shi mor porohit,
When we are away from others, he is my "porohit."

That is to say, when a man is in company, he forgets all about his "porohit." A "porohit" is a family priest, who performs the দহাকাজ (dahákáj), funeral ceremony, as well as other offices for the Assamese Hindu. The "porohit" is, as a rule, a Brahmin.

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54. *Straining at a gnat, etc.*

বেজিৰ জলাকে মনে কুঠাৰৰ জলাও ন মনে ।

Bejir jaláke mane kuthárar jaláo na mane.
He can see through the eye of a needle,
but not through that of an axe-head.

55. *Penny wise pound foolish.*

সাকত না যাই লোন, পিতিকাত যাই তিনি গুণ ।

Shákat ná jái lon, pitikát jái tini gun.

He does not use salt in cooking vegetables,
but three times the amount (of salt) goes in making salad.

The ordinary Assamese meal consists of—

i. "Bhat" (cooked rice).

ii. (*a*) fish or máh (dál) cooked, or

(*b*) fish and vegetable cooked together.

iii. In addition to the second, or as a substitute for it, a kind of salad is made; this is called "pitiká" by the Assamese. This is made from potatoes, vegetables, and chillies. These three ingredients are mixed with "kharali" (sauce).

The proverb is a warning against false economy, because it costs far less to use common salt in cooking than to make "pitiká."

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56. *Penny wise pound foolish.*

সেৰে সেৰে যাই পোৱালৈ কান্দে ।

Sere sere jái powáloi kánde.

Seers go away, but he cries after the quarter-seers.

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57. *Peevishness.*

নাই হে নেখাওঁ, লগুনেও নেযাওঁ,
গাটো নিদিও দুখ ।

Nái he nekháo, laguneo nejáo,
Gáto nidio dukh.

No, I won't eat. I won't go (to the feast),
even if a Brahmin is there.
I won't give myself any trouble.

This should be more properly laziness. The last line of the proverb should be, I think, the motto of the Assamese, for he hates, above all things, giving himself the least trouble.

"Even if a Brahmin is present" is a free translation. The literal translation is "even if a Brahminical thread is there." The লগুন is the Bengali পৈতা (poitá), or sacred thread worn by Brahmins and Khaysths.

58 *Presumption.*

কি নহবৰ হল, পোক লাগি হাটলৈ গল্ ।

Ki nahabar hal, pok lági hátaloi gal.

What a "contre temps" has occurred,
the man covered with sores has gone to the market.

পোক লাগি literally, full of maggots. Another reading is ভোক লাগি (bhok lági) for পোক লাগি, in which case the meaning of the proverb is ironical.

59. *Presumption.*

খচ খচ কৰা কাতা গুৱা,
তুমি জানা আমাৰ কিবা হোৱা ।

Khach khach kará kátá guá,
Tumi jáná ámár kibá howá.

Cut the betelnut quickly,
You know there is something between us.

Assamese women are supposed to give betelnut only to their husbands. The proverb illustrates a phase of a rustic "affaire du cœur." গুৱা is the same as তামোল (támol) betelnut.

60. *The pot calling the kettle black.*

নিজৰ পোকৰ তেক তেকিযা,
লোকৰ পোকৰলৈ পানি চটিযা ।

Nijar pokar tek tekiyá,
Lokar pokaraloi páni chatiyá.

Throwing water at the buttocks of others,
When one's own are covered with mire.

61. *Pride of family.*

নোম নেগুৰ বজিৎ,
মাকৰ নাম বৰ পোহাৰি ।
বাপেকৰ নাম ৰঞ্জিৎ ।

Nom negur bajit,
Mákar nám bar pohári,
Bápekar nám Ranjit.

Although it has no hair on its body and no tail,
It says its mother's name is Bar pohári,
And its father's Ranjit.

The first line describes a mangy cur. Notwithstanding its miserable condition, the animal is proud of its lineage, বৰ পোহাৰি. Assamese women who sell odds and ends, are called "pohári." বৰ is here used ironically. ৰঞ্জিত is a high-sounding name, only met with in good families.

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62. *Restlessness.*

ভাঙ্গি আন খুচৰি খাও।
পুৱা হলে নাও মেলি যাও।
Bhángi án khuchari kháo.
Puá hale náo meli jáo.

Bring the adze, I am itching to be off.
To-morrow morning I shall start in the boat.

This proverb is aimed at those who work by fits and starts only. ভাঙ্গি is a kind of curved adze, which is used in hollowing out boats from trunks of trees. নাও মেলি যাও literally, I will loose the boat (from its moorings).

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63. *Selfishness.*

আনৰ আন চিন্তা, বুড়ি বামুনীৰ দুখন কানৰ চিন্তা।
Ánar án chintá, buri bámunir dukhan kánar chintá.

Others have other thoughts, but the old Brahmin
woman thinks only of her two ears (*i.e.*, her earrings).

Chirstian, in his Bihar proverb, gives a Hindu proverb, which is very similar in meaning :—

Áno ke án chíta ráni ke rajawe ke chíta.
Others have other thoughts, but the ráni
has thoughts of the rája only.

Christian says the proverb is applied to one who is intent on his own thoughts only, regardless of others.

64. *Selfishness.*

আই গৈছিল গোঁসাই ঘৰলৈ,
মই গৈছিলো লগত,
আখৈ কলা খাবলৈ পাই,
তাতে হলো ভকত।

Ái goichil gosain gharaloi,
Moi goichilo lagat,
Ákhoi kalá khábaloi pái,
Táte halo bhakat.

My mother went to the house of the gosain,
I accompanied her.
When I got " ákhoi " and plantains to eat,
I became a " bhakat."

Perhaps this is a hit at the " bhakats." Apparently, the qualification for admission to the " sastro" as a " bhakat," is to be able to appreciate fried rice (ákhoi) and plantains. Bronson gives " parched corn " as the meaning of আখৈ, but there is a sweetmeat made of fried rice and gúr (molasses), which is also called আখৈ।

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65. *Egotism.*

আপোনাৰ মন জেনে,
আতাইকে দেখে তেনে,
জানো মন এতাইৰে একে।

Áponár man jene,
Átaike dekhe tene,
Jáno man etáire eke.

He thinks that everybody else's mind is like his own.
I doubt if all people think alike.

The proverb is interesting, as illustrating the use of জানো। This literally means, I know. In conversation, however, জানো often means, I doubt, almost I don't believe you.

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66. *Selfishness.*

খাইছে আখৈয়া গোমধান দিয়ে এদোন।

Kháiche ákhoiyá gomdhán diye edon.

He eats akhoiyá (a sweetmeat), but to others he gives a measure of Indian corn.

For the meaning of আথৈথা, see note to No. 63. গোমধান is the same as the Bengali ভুট্টা (bhuttá).

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67. *Selfishness.*

মুধে মুধে একে ঘৰ সোধো সোধো বুলি,
হল দেড় বচৰ সখী হেৰো তোমাৰ জ্বৰ ।

Mudhe mudhe eke ghar shodho shodho buli,
Hal der bachar shakhí hero tomár jar.

We live alongside one another.
For the last year and a half I have been intending
to ask you, dear friend, how is your fever.

মুধ is the ridgepole of the house. The expression মুধে মুধে is used when two houses are so close that their roofs touch one another. হেৰো or এৰো is a cry made to call anybody's attention. জ্বৰ is the Bengali জ্বর or তাপ (Indian fever).

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68. *Sponging on others.*

পৰৰ মুৰত খাও, ভটিয়া পানিত যাও ।
Parar murat kháo, bhatiyá pánit jáo.
I live upon others, and go with the tide.

The proverb probably means that he who lives on others, has to go along with the tide, and sink all individuality of character.

ভটিয়া literally is down-stream as opposed to উজান (ujáu) or up-stream.

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69. *Sponging on others.*

যি দেশৰ যি ধাৰা, যি পোকৰৰ যি নেৰা ।
Ji deshar ji dhárá ji pokarar ji nerá.

Every country has its own customs, and every one has
some hanger-on.

70. *Stinginess.*

দিওঁতে দিয়ে ধান খেৰৰ চাই,
তাকে দিও তেই খুচ মুচ খাই ।

Dio(n)te diye dhán kherar chái,
Táke dio tei khuch much khái.

When he gives (at all), he gives the ashes of paddy straw,
And it is a long time before he gives that even.

খুচ মুচ is an idiomatic expression, meaning to take a long time over doing nothing.

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71. *Stinginess.*

লোকৰ সভালৈ যাবা,
আমাৰ দিয়ন খোৱন চাবা ।

Lokar shabháloi jábá.
Ámár diyan khoan chábá.

Go to a gathering at some one else's house,
(And then) see my liberality.

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72. *Toadying.*

কাকো দেখি ৰান্ধে বাঢ়ে,
কাকো দেখি দুৱাৰ বান্ধে ।

Káko dekhi rándhe báṛe,
Káko dekhi duwár bándhe.

When (the host) sees some people, he cooks and serves them (a meal),
And when he sees others, he bars the door.

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73. *Trickery.*

তেলিয়াই কান্দে তেল পেলাই,
কপুহৱাই কান্দে লেট পেতাই ।

Teliyái kánde tel pelái.
Kapuhawái kánde let petái.

The oil-seller weeps for the oil that is spilt.
The cotton-dealer weeps and soaks (his cotton in the tears).

The cotton-dealer is not a man like the oilman, who "cries over spilt milk," but finds a way out of the difficulty. The latter part of the proverb, perhaps, refers to a practice which came under my personal observation when in the Golághát subdivision. The cotton is brought down from the hills by Nágas or other hillmen, who almost invariably soak it in water, or even sometimes put stones inside the bundle, to make the cotton weigh heavier. The cotton-dealer, who is not to be outdone, soaks the salt, which is generally bartered for the cotton, in water for the same reason. The translation I have given for লেট পেতাই, although not strictly literal, conveys the meaning, which is meant to be a sarcasm on the dealings of these cotton merchants. লেট পেতাই more correctly means having plastered.

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74. *Unsobriety in old age.*

একে বুড়ি নাচনিয়াৰ, তাতে নাতিনিয়েকৰ বিয়া ।
Eke buṛi náchaniyár, táte nátiniekar biyá.

The old woman is a capital dancer herself,
And now is the occasion of her granddaughter's marriage.

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75. *Want of feeling.*

কলিয়াবৰত পৈ মৰিল,
ঢেকি দিওতে মনত পৰিল ।
Koliyábarat poi maril,
Dheki dionte manat paril.

কলিয়াবৰ in the Nowgong distict, where there is a temple dedicated to কামা (Kámá), used to be regarded as a holy place. The proverb means that, although the husband was a man of some piety, the widow only thought of him, after his death, when she was working the dheki (paddy-husker), *i.e.*, she did not remember any of his good qualities.

Class II.

PROVERBS RELATING TO WORLDLY WISDOM AND MAXIMS, EXPEDIENCY AND CUNNING, AND WARNINGS AND ADVICE.

76. *A small income and much feasting.*

অলপ আৰ্জ্জন বিস্তৰ ভোজন,
সেই পুৰুষৰ দৰিদ্ৰৰ লক্ষণ ।

Alap árjan bistar bhojan,
Shei purushar daridrar lakhyan.

A small income and much feasting,
Are the signs of a man becoming poor.

আৰ্জ্জন=gain, income ; লক্ষণ=a mark or token.

77. *On trying to teach fools.*

অজ্ঞানিক জ্ঞান দি মনত পালো কষ্ট,
কনিবোৰ ভাঙ্গি পেলাই বাহো কৰিলো নষ্ট ।

A'giyánik giyán di manat pálo kashta,
Kanibor bhángi pelái báho karilo nashta.

In trying to teach a senseless woman I was much troubled,
So I threw down the eggs and destroyed the nest.

78. *Have nothing to do with three things.*

অসতীৰ সদ্ জ্ঞান,
গৰু চোৰৰ গঙ্গা স্নান,
বেশ্যা তীৰিৰ একাদশী,
তিনিওৰো মুৰত মুতা বহি ।

Ashatír shad giyán,
Garu chorar gangá snán,
Beshyá tírir ekádasí,
Tinioro murat mutá bahi.

Have nothing to do with these three things:
Honesty in an unchaste woman,
A cattle-chief bathing in the Ganges,
A harlot fasting on an ekádasí day.

79. *The importunate's answer.*

আপুনি আনিচো মাগি,
তোক দিম কৰ হাগি।
Ápuni ánicho mági,
Tok dim kar hági.
I myself have got it by begging,
....

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80. *Anticipating.*

আগেই পাখি কাতে,
কেই দিনৰ নোমল।
Ágei pákhi káte,
Kei dinar nomal.
He cuts the wings of the unfledged nestling beforehand.

নোমল, literally the smallest of all.

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81. *Times of affliction.*

আপদত ঔএও গল খজুৱাই।
Ápadat óeo gal khajuwái.
In times of affliction, even the "owtengá" tickles the throat.

The "owtenga" is an acid fruit, which is much used by the Assamese for cooking with rice to make the latter tasty.

cf.—আপদত গাৰ নোমেই দোস্মন হই (ápadat gár nomói dushman hoi.) In times of affliction, even the hair of one's body is an enemy.

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82. *Give a polite answer.*

আচে দান নাই সমীধান।
Áche dán nái shamídhán.
Give if you can; at any rate, say something polite.

সমিধান literally giving an answer.

83. *When all scruples must be thrown to the winds.*

আপদত অযুগুত কৰিবলৈ যুৱাই ।

Ápadat ajugut karibaloi juwái.

In times of adversity, all scruples must be thrown to the winds.

অযুগুত=Bengali অযোগ্য (unbefitting).

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84. *On aiming too high.*

উঠুৱাই মাৰিলে কাঠি,
জালোৱা ডোমৰ সাতজনি তিৰুতা,
মুৰলৈ নাতিলে পাটি ।

Uthuwái márile káthi,
Jálowá domar shátjani tirutá,
Muraloi nátile páti.

He shot an arrow high (into the air).
The "jálowá" dum has seven wives.
But he has not a bed for one wife even.

উঠুৱাই literally, caused to mount up. জালোৱা ডোম is used in contradistinction to হালোৱা ডোম (the ploughing dum). পাটি is matting made from the splints of a tree called দৈ (doi).

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85. *The petty shopkeeper.*

এদা বেপাৰীক জাহাজৰ বাতৰি কিয় ।

Edá bepárik jáhájar bátari kiya.

What does a petty shopkeeper want with news of the steamer?

এদা বেপাৰী literally a shopkeeper who sells ginger (এদা)

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86. *Do one thing at a time.*

ওৰোকতে পৰোক,
কেৰেলাটো স্নমুৱাই দিয়া,
বেঙেনাটো পোৰোক ।

Otokate parok,
Kerelá to shumuái diyá,
Bengená to porok.

Do one thing at a time,
First of all cook the kerelá,
And then roast the bengená.

Literally the bengená will burn if the kerelá is put into the fire.

কেৰেলা is the Bengali করলা, Hindi koraila.

The kerelá is the "momordica charantia," a very bitter kind of vegetable of the gourd family. It is a creeping plant.

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87. *Learning.*

ওজা লগা বিদ্যা,
পাখি লগা কাৰ ।

Ojá lagá bidyá,
Pákhi lagá kár.

What the feather is to the arrow,
His art is to the magician.

ওজা is a magician, or more frequently an exorcist,—(*Vide* note to Proverb No. 17.)

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88. *Circumstantial evidence.*

কঠাল চোৰৰ এঠাই সাখি,
হাঁহ চোৰৰ মূৰত পাখি ।

Kathál chorar ethái shákhi,
Há(n)h chorar murat pákhi.

The gum is evidence against the jack fruit-stealer,
And the feathers stick to the head of the duck-stealer.

কঠাল is the jack tree and its fruit. Bengali কণ্টকী (kantakí); both the bark of the tree and the fruit are covered with a sticky juice or gum.

89. *A person with a great idea of his own importance.*

কৰ পৰা আহিলা কত দিলা ভৰি,
চোতাল খান ফাটি গল চেত চেত কৰি ।

Kar pará áhilá kat dilá bhari,
Chotál khán phàti gal chet chet kari.

Whence do you come ?
Wherever you trod on the courtyard, it split in pieces.

Literally, whence comest thou? This is said ironically to somebody who gives himself airs. চেত চেত is one of the many Assamese expressions for conveying the sense of sound. Another such onomatopœic expression is খতং মতং; also গৃঙ্গ (giring). There are others that could be mentioned. চেত চেত কৰি is meant to convey the idea of noise in splitting or tearing asunder.

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90. *On appearing on the* "Chotai" *Hill.*

কিহৰ জগৰত মৰো
চতাই পৰ্ব্বতত গাটো
দেখাদি আধুলি
পাচোটা ভৰো।

Kihar jagarat maro
Chatái parbatat gáto
Dekhádi ádhuli
Páchotá bharo.

What fault have I committed?
I have appeared on the Chatái hill,
And have to pay five eight-anna pieces.

The চতাই পৰ্ব্বত is a mythical hill, which was supposed to be situated somewhere in the Sibságar district. The proverb applies to the case of a person who has to pay a fine for some imaginary fault.

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91. *Finding the lost sickle.*

ককালত কাচি
বুড়ি ফুৰে নাচি।

Kakálat káchi
Buri phure náchi.

When the old woman has found her sickle,
She dances for joy.

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92. *Disregard of good advice.*

কথা বা কত ভেকুৰি তলত।

Kathá bá kat bhekuri talat.

Where is your advice? Underneath the "bhekuri" bush?

ভেকুৰি is a kind of scrub jungle.

93. *Selfishness.*

কাৰ ভাগিনা মৰে কাৰ হয় হানি,
কাৰ জৰত কোনে পিওৱাই পানি।

Kár bháginá mare kár hoi háni,
Kár jarat kone piowái páni.

Whose nephew dies it is his loss.
In whose fever does anyone give water to drink?

The proverb aptly illustrates the way of the world in such cases. পিওৱাই means পিবলৈ দিয়ে (gives to drink), and is the causative form of পিবলৈ (to drink); ভাগিনা or ভাগিন is a sister's son.

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94. *The reward of merit*

কেনে তোৰ কেনে জনি ফপৰিয়া তোৰ তিনি জনি
ভাল তোৰ এজনীও নাই।

Kene tor kene jani phapariyá tor tini jani
Bhal tor ejanío nái.

What a wife for such a man!
The worthless has three wives, the worthy none.

As a rule, Assamese have but one wife, or two at the most, but occasionally, amongst well-to-do people of the old-fashioned class, the luxury of three wives is indulged in. ফপৰিয়া literally scurfy.

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95. *Don't be too discriminating.*

কাকো নুবুলিবা ককা
এতাইৰে দাড়ি চুলি পকা।

Káko nubulibá kaká,
Etáire dári chuli paká.

Don't call anyone (of them) grandfather;
They have all of them got white hair and beards.

The proverb means that all are equally cunning, and that one must not single out any particular person and call him ককা, a clever old fellow. পকা literally means ripe, as a fruit. It so comes to mean mature, and when applied to the hair of the head or face turned gray, or of a mature colour.

It is interesting to compare a Bihar proverb given by Christian in his "Bihar Proverbs," which means very much the same as the Assam proverb above :

Kekar kekar lihi(n) nao(n) kamra orhle sagare gáo(n).

which Christian translates—"Whom am I to name ? All the villages are similarly circumstanced ! (Literally, all are alike, covered with blankets, *i.e.*, poor, in the same boat)."

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96. *Assamese recipe for managing a wife.*

কটাৰি ধৰাবা শিলে, তিৰোতা বাবা কিলে ।
Katári dharábá shilé, tirotá bábá kile.

Whet your knife on the grindstone.
Sway your wife with blows.

This is the Assamese recipe for managing a wife. কিল is a blow given with the elbow, and represents the pommelling given to a person when he is lying prostrate.

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97. *The one-eyed, the lăme, and the crooked.*

কণা, খোড়া, ভেঙ্গুৰ,
এই তিনি হাৰামৰ লেঙ্গুৰ ।
Kaná, khoṛa, bhengur,
Ei tini hárámar lengur.

The one-eyed, the lame, and the crooked,
These three are a tail of ill.

There are various Indian proverbs regarding one-eyed, squint-eyed, and grey-eyed people being untrustworthy, so that the Assamese are not alone in their idea.

Christian gives the following proverbs, amongst others, in his Bihar Proverbs :—

"(Birle kán bhal bhal mánukh), *i.e.*, Rarely do you meet with a one-eyed man who is a gentleman."

Also the following Urdu saying on the same subject, where a forced pun is made on the Arabic word kan = is :

"Káne ki badzátiyá(n) hain mere dil yaqin,
Áyá hai Qorán me(n) kán me(n) alkáfrin."

Of the wickedness of the one-eyed I am thoroughly convinced,
Because even in the Qorán it is said that the one-eyed is among the unbelievers."

98. *Useless cravings.*

খাবলৈ নায কনটো,
বৰ হবলৈ মনটো ।

Khábaloi nái kanto,
Bar habaloi manto.

He who has not a grain (of rice) to eat,
Has a mind to become great.

কন is the eye or germ of a seed, that which germinates or reproduces an atom.—(*Bronson*). So it comes to mean anything small. Young children are often called কন or কন লৰা, কন চোআলি ।

99. *Cattle climbing trees, and the lobe of the ear being bored with a bamboo.*

গছত গৰু উঠা,
হোলোঙ্গাৰে কান বিন্ধা ।

Gachat garu uthá,
Holongáre kán bindhá.

As wonderful as a bullock climbing a tree,
Or the lobe of the ear being pierced with a holongá.

Men as well as women bore their ears in Assam. When an earring is not worn, a piece of wood is inserted to keep the hole from closing up. Sometimes paper or cotton is used, but generally a cylindrically-shaped piece of wood. A হোলোঙ্গা is a split bamboo, used for carrying bundles of paddy, when reaping and carrying is going on. The holongá is slightly curved in shape, so as to more readily fit on to the shoulder. The bundles of dhán (paddy) are slung on to each end of the holongá in equal proportions, so that the holongá balances on the shoulder. In this way all burdens are carried in Assam, but the word হোলোঙ্গা, I believe, is only applied to the pole used for carrying dhán. কানমাৰি (kánmári) is the word for the bamboo that is used for carrying other burdens.

100. *Laughing at others' misfortunes.*

ঘোক বাই ঘোক সাপে খালে তোক,
মাচটি পালে মোক।

Ghok bai ghok shápe khále tok,
Máchti pále mok.

"Ghok," sister "Ghok," a snake has bitten you,
And I have caught a fish.

This is said in chaff by one girl fishing to another likewise engaged.

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101. *Useless cravings.*

ঘৰত নাই কনটো, বৰ সভালৈ মনটো ।

Gharat nái kanto, bar shabháloi manto.

He has not a grain of rice in his house, but he wishes to go to a big feast.

This is almost similar to No. 97, except that সভা is substituted for the verb হবলৈ. Also compare the Gauháti proverb "উৰালত নাই কনটো বৰ সভালৈ মনটো (urálat nái kanto bar shabháloi manto). The উড়াল or উৰাল is a wooden mortar used for pounding rice in.

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102. *How things are tested.*

ঘোৰাক চিনি কাণত,
তিৰিক চিনি ঠানত,
খুৰক চিনি সালত।

Ghorák chini kánat,
Tirik chini thánat,
Khurak chini shálat.

A horse is known by his ears,
A woman in times of adversity,
And a razor on a whetstone.

The idea here is that a good horse keeps his ears erect; a virtuous wife will be faithful in adversity, and a good razor does

not break on the whetstone. As to the faithfulness of women, horses, etc., *cf.* the Persian proverb :—

" Asp o zan o shamsher-i-tez wafádár ke did. "

What man ever saw a horse, a woman, or a sword faithful!

খুৰ (khur) (or khyur) is the usual word for razor. সাল is here used to mean a grindstone. Shál is applied to almost any machine, *e.g.*, কুহিয়াৰসাল (kuhiyár shál), a sugar-mill.

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103. *The irony of fate.*

চোৰে নিয়া লফা দাय,
গিৰি হতে মৰে খাৰলি খায়।

Chore niyá laphá dái,
Giri hate mare khárli khái.

When the thief steals the " laphá, "
The householder is ready to die of grief,
but consoles himself with chutney.

An amusing comment on the irony of fate, perhaps. The লফা সাক is a common Assamese vegetable. খাৰলি is a kind of chutney made from mustard-seed. দায় literally reaps.

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104. *Sudden misfortunes.*

চোৰক মোৰে পালে,
তাঁতিক বৰলে খালে।

Chorak more pále,
Tá(n)tik barale khále.

The thief was seized with colic,
And a wasp stung the weaver.

Both of these are intended to be instances of sudden and unexpected mishap.

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105. *Avoiding a rain cloud by bending down.*

চাপৰিলে মেঘ এৰাব নে।

Cháparile megh erába ne.

Can a rain cloud be avoided by bending down ?

106. *Never waste a moment.*

জাৰ খাবৰ জীবৰ মন,
বহোতে আচোৰে বন ।

Jár khábar jíbar man,
Bahote áchore ban.

He who has a mind to thrive,
Scratches up grass, even when sitting down.

খাবৰ জীবৰ মন literally, the mind for eating and living. The proverb means that people who wish to succeed, should never waste a moment, which may be devoted to work. The grass referred to is that growing in the man's garden or field.

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107. *The man who has too many relations.*

জেঠেৰি বৈনায় হাল
কিহৰ পাল এ.পাল ।

Jetheri boinái hál
Kihar pál e pál.

He has got herds
And herds of brother-in-law.

জেঠেৰি = a wife's elder brother. বৈনাই = a younger sister's husband. পাল also means a sail, and a turn of duty. The proverb relates to the case of a man who has more relations by marriage than convenient.

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108. *On being taken to task for a trifling fault.*

জগৰ বা লগালো কি
মাতো হাঁহ কনিদি ।

Jagar bá lagálo ki
Máto-há(n)h kanidi.

What fault have I committed ?
I admit I am wrong, and give you a duck's egg.

The proverb refers to the case of a person who thinks he is taken to task for a trifling fault.

109. *The light of a lamp amid the glare of a torch.*

জোৰৰ আগত বাতিৰ পোহৰ ।

Jorar ágat bátir pohar.

The light of a lamp amid the glare of a torch.

The proverb means that the feeble light of a lamp would not be noticed in the strong light given by a torch.

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110. *Sleep is pleasant.*

টোপনিৰ চিকণ পুৱা ।
কটাৰিৰ চিকণ গুৱা ।

Topanir chikan puá.
Katárir chikan guá.

To sleep in the early morning is pleasant.
A good knife is required to cut betelnut.

This proverb is characteristic of the Assamese.

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111. *The punishment of sin, though tardy, perhaps, is sure.*

তাহা নিয়ে খালে টেঙ্গা,
এতিয়া পালেহি জেঙ্গা ।

Táhá niye khále tengá,
Etiyá pálehi jengá.

He ate the "tengá" a long time ago,
And he is blamed now!

The proverb refers to the case of a man whose sin has found out. He stole the orange and ate it long ago, and he gets into hot water about it now!

জেঙ্গা means an offence, anything at which exception is taken.

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112. *"Meum and tuum."*

তোৰ হলে মোৰ, মোৰ হলে বাপেৰেও না পায় তোৰ ।

Tor hale mor, mor hale bápereo ná pái tor.

What is yours is mine, but what is mine cannot be got even by your father.

113. *Ingratitude.*

ঠাই দিবৰ গুণ, তপং তপনি শুন।

Thái dibar gun, tapang tapani shun.

The result of giving a person a place, is to hear him grumble.

The proverb means that if you give a person a place at a feast, in all probability he will not thank you for your courtesy, but will only grumble.

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114. *Pride goeth before a fall.*

দোলাৰ নামেৰে সিকিয়াতে জাবা,
গাখিৰৰ নামেৰে পানিকে খাবা।

Dolár námere shikiyáte jábá,
Gákhirar námere pánike khábá.

Instead of being carried in a dooly,
you will be carried slung on a pole;
And instead of milk you will drink water.

দোলা is the Bengali ডুলি, a litter for carrying people in. সিকিয়া is a contrivance of ropes for slinging burdens on to a bamboo.

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115. *The use of the thumb.*

দহো আঙ্গুলিৰে খায়,
বুড়াই হেচুকিলেহে যাই।

Dahò ángulire khái,
Burái hechukilehe jái.

All the ten fingers are used in eating,
But it is the thumb that has to push the eatables into the mouth.

The Assamese takes up the rice in the hollow of his hand, and then crams it into his mouth, using the thumb to push it in—not a very elegant way of eating. বুড়া = বৰ আঙ্গুলি (the chief finger).

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116. *"Many hands make light work."*

দহোটা লাখুটি এটাৰ বোঝা।

Dahotá lákhuti etár bojhá.

The staves of ten men are a load to one man.

cf.—The Bihar proverb given by Christian—

" (Das ka láthi ek ka bojh). The idea conveyed is the same as in our proverb " Many hands make light work."

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117. " *Evils never come singly.*"

দুৰ কপলিয়া হাবিলৈ জাই, দা চিগে বৰলে খাই ।

Dur kapaliyá hábiloi jái, dá chige barale khãi.

The unfortunate one goes to the wood,
and his " dá " breaks, and a wasp stings him.

This is a case of " Evils never come singly." বৰল is the Bengali বৰটা (a wasp). The use of খাই is noteworthy ; it means (literally) eats. The Assamese has no regular word for sting. *cf.*—সাপে খালে (shápe khále) a snake bit him—literally eat him.

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118. *How the poor are despised.*

দুখিয়া হলে লেটেৰা ভাৰ্য্যা নেদেখে হিত,
বাটত লগ পাই মিতিৰে নোশোধে দিব লাগে বুলি কিবা বিত ।

Dukhiyá hale leterá bhárjyá nedekhe hit,
Bátat lag pái mitire noshodhe diba láge buli kibá bit.

When leterá (the sloven) becomes poor,
his wife does not esteem him ;
When his friends meet him by the way, they take no notice
of him, fearing they will have to help him with money.

The first proverb is an illustration of our own saying that " When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window." The second part shows the way of the world in such cases. লেটেৰা, the man's name in this proverb, literally means a sloven. ভাৰ্য্যা is a Bengali word for wife. The common Assamese word is ঘৈনি (ghoini). হিত literally means advantageous, profitable. নোশোধে (literally) do not ask after him. বিত is a synonym for ধন (dhan).

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119. *When everything has gone wrong.*

ঢেকিটো লৰক ফৰক কটৰাটো ভগা,
খোল কলৈ গল তাৰহে লগা ।

Dhekito larak pharak kataráto bhagá,
Khol kaloi gal tárahe lagá.

The dheki has become unsteady, the cup is broken.
Where has the drum gone? Away with the violin string?

When the rice-husking machine is out of order, everything goes wrong in the household. The cup is broken, the drum is missing, and the violin has lost its string. This is the meaning of the proverb. The "dheki" has been described already. কটৰা is a cup made out of a cocoanut shell. খোল is a long cylindrically-shaped drum, which is slung round the neck and beaten with both hands. খোল must not be confounded with ঢোল (dhol) or মৃদঙ্গ (mridang), which are drums of different shapes. তাৰ is the string of a kind of violin called বিন (bin). The বিন is a single-stringed instrument, which may be the same as the Bengali বীণা (bíná).

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120. *Idiosyncrasies.*

ধানটোয়ে পতি কনটো,
মানুহটোযে পতি মনটো ।
Dhántoye pati kanto,
Mánuhtoye pati manto.

Each grain of paddy has its grain of rice;
Each person has his idiosyncrasy.

The first line is put in with the idea of throwing additional emphasis on the second line. As a matter of fact, it is incorrect that each grain of paddy contains a grain of rice, as any Assamese peasant will tell you, or you can see for yourself. A certain number of grains in each ear contain nothing. The Assamese call such পতান (patán).

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121. *A good piece of advice.*

ধন লবা লেখি, বাট বুলিবা দেখি ।
Dhan labá lekhi, bát bulibá dekhi.

Count money first before you take it over.
Tell the way if you have seen the road.

A very sensible piece of advice.

122. *The husband of a shrew.*

নৰকৰ কন্যা উদ্ধাৰিলে শুচি।

Narakar kanyá uddhárile shuchi.

A bride from hell has been my salvation.

These words are spoken sarcastically by a man who has a shrew of a wife. নৰক is one of the many infernal regions enumerated in the Hindu books. Manu speaks of twenty-one hells and gives their names. Other authorities vary greatly as to the numbers and names of the hells. (See Vishnu Puran, II, 214, and Dowson's Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology.)

123. *Cutting off the tiger's tail.*

নেগুৰ কাটি বাঘ সোঙ্গলৈ মেলিলে।

Negur káti bágh shongaloi melile.

They cut off the tiger's tail, and then let him loose in his haunt.

This refers to an idea that if a tiger's tail is cut off, the beast loses all its strength.

124. *A name that bodes ill-luck.*

নামৰ পৰিচে সাং দুৱৰত মাৰাহি দাঙ।

Námar pariche sháng duarat máráhi dáng.

From his name even ill-luck comes, go and bolt the door.

i.e., to prevent his entering the house. It is not an uncommon idea that certain persons bring ill-luck to a house. Some people are supposed to have the "evil eye"; these are particularly shunned. In Bihar, Christian says it is considered very unlucky to pronounce the name of a miser in the morning. In Assam, it is generally considered unlucky to pronounce the names of certain low castes, such as Doms and Haris.

125. "*People who live in glass-houses should not throw stone.*"

নাহাহিবি মোক খুচৰিব তোক।

Náháhibi mok khucharibа tok.

Don't laugh at me, it will scratch you.

People who laugh at others' misfortunes, are thus advised.

126. *Ill-gotten gains.*

পাপৰ ধন প্ৰায়শ্চিত্তত যাই ।

Pápar dhan práyshchitat jái.

Money got by unfair means, goes in expiations.

The প্ৰায়শ্চিত্ত is imposed by the "gosain," or spiritual guide. It consists of (*a*) money payment to the gosain, (*b*) penance, (*c*) certain duties to be performed.

127. *Don't lose time in partaking of a meal when it is ready.*

পালে চৰাই ভাঙ্গিবা পাখি, হোৱা ভাতক ন থবা ৰাখি ।

Pále charái bhángibá pákhi, howá bhátak na thabá rákhi.

When you have caught a bird, break its wings.
Don't place on one side rice which is ready.

128. *Four people should always be intent on their work.*

পৰ্হে, পৰ্হাই, বোয়ে, বোয়াই পান,
এই তিনি চাৰিয়ে নিচিন্তে আন ।

Parhe, parhái, boye, boyái pán,
Ei tini cháriye nichinte án.

He who reads, he who teaches, he who sows *pán*,
he who causes to sow *pán*,
These four should not think of anything else.

129. *Learning by heart.*

পৰ্হি শুনি কৰিলে হিয়া, চোৰে লৈ গল ভাৰ দিয়া ।

Parhi shuni karile hiyá, chore loi gal bhár diyá.

He learnt it by heart, and then a thief stole it away.

This is a sarcastic allusion to a fool, who tries to commit something to memory.

130. *Want of tact.*

বাটত লগ পালে কমাৰ, দা গড়ি দিয়া আমাৰ ।

Bátat lag pále kamár, dá gaṛi diyá ámár.

They met the blacksmith on the road and said "Make a knife for us,"

i.e., they expected the blacksmith to be able to make a "da" for them when he was away from his forge.

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131. *One who is always in hot water.*

বাৰটা মাহৰ তেৰটা জগৰ, সদাই নগুচে এটা লগৰ ।

Báratá máhar teratá jagar, shadái naguche etá lagar.

In twelve months thirteen scrapes.
I cannot exist without getting into hot water.

This is the complaint of somebody who is always in trouble.

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132. বলিয়ে নিৰ্ব্বলীয়ে কিহৰ হতাহতি,
ধনীয়ে নিধনীয়ে কিহৰ মিত্ৰাৰতী ।

Balíye nirbalíye kihar hatáhati,
Dhaníye nidhaníye kihar mitráwatí.

What passage-of-arms can there be between the strong and the weak.
What friendship can there be between the rich and the poor.

বলি means a strong man. Dowson writes—

"There was also in the Tretayuga, or second age, a daitya king, Bali or Boli, who had, by his devotions and austeritics, acquired the dominion of the three worlds, and the gods were shorn of their power and diginty. To remedy this, Vishnu was born as a diminutive son of Kasyapa and Aditi. The dwarf appeared before Bali and begged of him as much land as he could step over in three paces. The generous monarch complied with the request. Vishnu took two strides over heaven and earth; but respecting the virtues of Bali, he then stopped, leaving the dominion of pátála, or the infernal regions, to Bali."

বলি also means a sacrifice. হতাহতি means hand-to-hand conflict; also two people working together at the same task. মিত্ৰাৰতী is the same as মিত্তিৰালি, which means friendship.

133. *So terrible that even Bhagabanto and Basudev are afraid.*

ভয়ত ভগৱন্ত পলাই কিললৈ বাসুদেৱ দৰাই।

Bhayat Bhagabanta palái kilalai Basudeo darái.

Bhagabanta even flies from fear, and Basudev is afraid that he will be beaten.

ভগৱন্ত or ভগৱান is পৰমেশ্বৰ (Parmeswar), বাসুদেৱ is another name for কৃষ্ণ (Krishna). The above saying is quoted in the case of a person of ungovernable temper.

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134. *Bitter words are hard to hear.*

ভাতৰ তিতা খাবলৈ ভাল, মাতৰ তিতা খাবলৈ টান।

Bhátar titá khábaloi bhál, mátar titá khábaloi tán.

It is good to eat bitter rice, but it is hard to hear bitter words.

ভাতৰ তিতা, *i.e.*, rice cooked with tengás (acid fruits).

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135. *From good comes good.*

ভালৰ ভাল সৰ্ব্বতি কাল।

Bhálar bhál sharbati kál.

Good comes from good for all time.

সৰ্ব্বতি কাল (literally), for ever and ever.

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136. *Which is the sweeter—sweet words or sweet food ?*

ভোজন মিঠা নে বচন মিঠা ?

Bhojan mithá ne bachan mithá ?

Which is sweeter—sweet food or sweet words ?

বচন also means a passage from a sacred book.

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137. *Only go when you are invited.*

মাতিলে ৰনলৈকো জাবা, নে মাতিলে ভোজলৈ নাজাবা।

Mátile ranaloiko jábá, ne mátile bhojaloi nájábá.

Go to a battle even if you are summoned, but don't go to a feast uninvited.

This saying means that the person who would go to a feast uninvited, would not perhaps be so ready to go to battle if called upon.

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138. *On growing old.*

মোৰ পোৰ বোৱাৰি হব, মোক চুলিত ধৰি বাটত থব ।

Mor por bowári haba, mok chulit dhari bátat thaba.

My son will have a sister-in-law,
Who will catch me by the hair and throw me on the path.

বোৱাৰি is a younger brother's wife. The speaker here is the old mother, who views with dismay the prospect of her new daughter-in-law.

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139. *Cutting wood by no means an easy task.*

মোমাইয়ে কাঠ কাতে মায়ে পানি হেন দেখে ।

Momáiye káth káte máye páni hen dekhe.

The maternal uncle cuts wood ;
his wife thinks this as easy a job as drawing water.

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140. *Where there is a will there is a way.*

মন কৰিলে চল কৰিব পাৰিম ।

Man karile chal kariba párim.

If I put my mind to it, I can find a way out of the difficulty.

চল literally stratagem, device or trick. Sometimes also it means fraud or forgery.

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141. *The shorter it is, the more it tears.*

জেতেকতে নাটে, তেতেকতে ফাতে ।

Jetekate náte, tetekate pháte.

The shorter it is, the more it tears.

The meaning is rather obscure. One would have thought that a garment which was worn too long, *i.e.*, touching the ground, would be more likely to tear than a short one, high off the ground. Possibly, the saying may have some reference to the woman's

petticoat, or মেকেলা (mekelá), which, in the best families, is worn as long as possible. It is considered bad form to wear a short "mekelá."

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142. *None but the wearer knows where the shoe pinches.*

লুইতেহে জানে বঠা কিমান লৈ বহে ।

Luitehe jáne bathá kimána loi bahe.

The Luhit knows how deep the oar dips.

The Luhit is another name for the Brahmaputra. Now-a-days by the Luhit is understood that portion of the Brahmaputra between the mouth of the "Subansiri" river and Luhitmukh. The saying has the same meaning as our own proverb "None but the wearer knows where the shoe pinches."

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143. *A man of no consequence.*

লাথী মাৰিলেও জিটো, বোপাই বুলিলেও সিটো ।

Láthí márileo jito, bopái bulileo shito.

It is all the same whether you kick him or call him father.

The saying means that it is not worth while pleasing a certain person, for বোপাই is a friendly address. লাথী means a kick given backwards at any one following up behind. In the original version was লাঠি. When spelt this way, the word means a stick or a club.

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144. *The boon of having a travelling companion.*

লগ হলে লঙ্কালৈকো জাব পাৰি ।

Lag hale langkáloiko jába pári.

In company one can go even as far as Langká.

Langká is the name given by Hindus to Ceylon.

145. *The more haste the less speed.*

লৰা লৰি বেলিকা জোলোঙাত জাপি নেসোমাই।

Lará lari beliká jolongát jápi neshomái.

When you are in a hurry,
you can't fit in even a jápi into the knapsack.

This saying is meant to illustrate the idea expressed in our own proverb " The more haste the less speed."

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146. *What makes up the house.*

লৰাই লুৰিযে ঘৰ খান,
দোখোৰাই দুখৰিযে ঘৰ খান।

Larái luriye ghar khán,
Dokhorái dukhariye ghar khán.

Children make up the house.
Sundries also make up the same.

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147. *Do as you would be done by.*

সমানে সমানে কৰিবা কাজ,
হাৰিলে জিকিলে নাই লাজ।

Shamáne shamáne karibá káj,
Hárile jikile nái láj.

Deal equally with your equals,
And then whether you succeed in life or not, you need not be ashamed.

In fact, " Do as you would be done by."

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148. *Even little things are of profit.*

সোলা মুখত মাখি পৰে
সিও লাভৰ ভিতৰ।

Sholá mukhat mákhi pare
Shio lábhar bhitar.

Even if a fly falls into a toothless mouth,
It is a gain.

সোলা means the same as লাপুঙ্গ (lápung), *i.e.*, toothless.

149. *The kiss of love.*

সেলেহৰ চুমাই নাকটি চিঙ্গে ।

Shelehar chumái nákti chinge.

The kiss of love wounds the nose.

নাকটি=literally the cartilage of the nose. চিঙ্গে=literally breaks asunder.

150. *Half a loaf is better than no bread.*

হেৰা পোৱা ধনৰ চৌদ্ধ আনা ও ভাল ।

Herá powá dhanar choddha áná o bhál.

If you find even fourteen annas of lost money, it is well.

151. *When the bone of contention is removed.*

হাঁহ পোৱালী নিলে সেনে ।
তুমি জেনে মযো তেনে ।

Ha(n)h powálí nile shene.
Tumi jene mayo tene.

The hawk has carried off the duckling,
Now we are equal.

Literally, I am the same as you are. The hawk has carried off your duckling, so you can't lord it over me any longer.

152. *The man who is blind.*

ঝাপি, লাঠি, টঙ্গা, ইযাক জি নলয,
শি দিনতে কনা ।

Jhápi, láthi, tangá, iyák ji nalai,
Shi dinate kaná.

He who carries neither jhápi, láthi or tangá,
Is blind even in the daytime.

153. *" People who live in glass-houses, etc. "*

চাই চাই বুলিবা বাট দেহৰ ভিতৰত আচে খাল বাম, পিচলি পৰিবা তাত ।

Chái chái bulibá bát dehar bhitarat áche khál bám,
pichali paribá tát.

Look out as you move, for there are many holes within your own body, and you might slip into one of them.

This is a sort of equivalent for "People in glass-houses should not throw stones."

154. *Nothing is attained without labour.*

দুখ না কৰিলে মুখ না ভৰাই ।

Dukh ná karile mukh ná bharái.

If you don't take trouble, you won't fill your mouth.

155. *Nothing is attained without labour.*

দুখতহে মুখ ভৰে বুৰা লোকে কয় ।
সকলো শুনি চালে মিচা নহয় ।

Dukhathe mukh bhare burá loke koy,
Shakalo shuni chále michá nahoy.

Labour alone fills the mouth, so the old folk say;
Every one has heard this and seen this; it is not false.

This is another proverb like the preceding one.

156. *Silence is golden.*

কথাৰ দুত্ৰাসাৰ বান্ধৰ দু মেৰ ।

Kathár dutráshár bándhar duimer.

Two words in speaking, two rounds in a fastening.

This means that you should not say more than is absolutely necessary on an occasion. Two rounds in a fastening refers to the splicing together of bamboos when two rounds or more are made with the rope or cane before the knot is tied.

157. *A person not worth conciliating.*

ধাৰে মাৰিলেও যেনে, গাদিৰে মাৰিলেও তেনে ।

Dháre márileo jene, gádire márileo tene.

It is the same whether you strike with the sharp edge or the blunt side (of the dá).

This saying refers to a person who is so weak and insignificant, that it is all the same whether he is your enemy or your friend, as he cannot injure you or benefit you. ধাৰ (dhár) and গাদি (gádi) are always used to denote the sharp edge and blunt side of a "da ."

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158. *Crying over spilt milk.*

কান্দিলে ধাৰ সোধ নে জাই ।

Kándile dhár shodh ne jái.

By weeping a debt is not paid.

It is no good crying over spilt milk.

সোধাই (shodhái), in addition to its usual meaning, *i.e.*, to cause an enquiry to be made, means to deposit or commit to the care of another, and so to pay.

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159. *A chip of the old block.*

বাপেক জেনে পিতেক তেনে ।

Bápek jene pitek tene.

Like father, like son.

i.e., the son is "a chip of the old block."

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160. *Can a leopard change his spots.*

এঙ্গাৰ ধোলে ও বগা নাহয় ।

Engar dhole o bagá náhoy.

Even with washing, charcoal cannot become white.

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161. *The poor ever anxious.*

জাৰ নাই বিত, মনে কৰে পিত পিত ।

Jár nái bit, mane kare pit pit.

He who has no money, is anxious in mind.

পিত (pit) literally is gall or bile.

162. *Responsibilities of power.*

জত ৰাজ তত কাজ ।

Jata ráj tata káj.

Wherever there are kingdoms, there are duties to be performed.

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163. *Rules of Society.*

প্ৰবাসত নিষম নাই ।

Prabáshat niyam nái.

In a temporary residence there is no rule.

The proverb means that when you are away from home, there is no necessity for thinking about *les convenances* of society. Another reading is—

প্ৰদেশত নিয়ম নাই ।

Pradeshat niyam nai.

In a foreign country you need not regard rules of society.

With reference to this proverb, *cf.* No. 82; also the Bihar proverb given by Christian (page 70 of his book)—

"Jaison des, taisan bhes."

"Suit your behaviour to the country."

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164. *Half a loaf is better than no bread.*

একো নহোৱাতকৈ কনা মোমাই ও ভাল ।

Eko nahowatkoi kaná momái o bhál.

A blind uncle is better than no uncle.

Here কনা is used to signify a blind person, its real meaning being one-eyed.

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165. *Pick up wood with care.*

কাক দামা চাই লৰি বা খৰী ।
তাৰে কান মাৰি তাৰে জৰি ।

Kák dámá chái lari bá kharí.
Táre kán mári táre jari.

Pick up the wood with care,
So that you can find your stick for carrying the bundle of faggots on, as well as the fastening.

Class III.

PROVERBS RELATING TO PECULIARITIES OF CERTAIN CASTES AND CLASSES.

166. *Ahoms.*

আহোমৰ চকলং হিন্দুৰ বেই ।
তোমাৰ পাতলিত পৰিচো জেই কৰা নেই ।

Áhomar chaklang Hindur bei.
Tomár pátalit paricho jei kará neí.

For the Áhoms the "chaklang" and for the Hindus the "bei,"
Deal with me as you like, now that I am in your grip.

These lines are meant to express the feelings of a bride after marriage.

চকলং (chaklang) is the name of the Ahom marriage ceremony. বেই (bei) or বিয়া (biyá) is the Bengali বিয়ে (biye), or বিবাহ (bibáha). বেই (bei) is the word generally used to denote the Hindu marriage ceremony of the হোম (Hom). Now-a-days, nearly all marriages, even amongst the Ahoms and Chutiás, are performed according to the Hindu custom, there being very few "chaklang" ceremonies. The Ahoms and Chutiás are becoming rapidly Hinduised.

167. *Bhakats.*

কনি পাৰে হাঁহে খাই ভকত দাঁহে ।
Kani páre há(n)he khái bhakat dá(n)he.
Ducks lay eggs and the Bhakats eat them.

ভকত (bhakat).—This is the name given to the disciples of the gosains.

168. *Bhakats.*

ভকতত‌কৈ ঢেকি থোৰা টো দাঙৰ নে ?
Bhakatatkoi dheki thorá to dángar ne?

Is the pestle of the "dheki" heavier than a "bhakat"?

The থোৰা (thorá) is the heavy pestle fixed on the lever of the dheki. The meaning of the proverb is that a "bhakat" is a heavier burden to support than even the weighty dheki thorá.

169. *Bhakats.*

জেতিযা মাৰিব ঢোলত চাপৰ,
তেতিযা লবা মুৰত কাপৰ ।

Jetiyá máriba dholat chápar,
Tetiyá labá murat kápar.

When they (the bhakats) clap their hands at the temple,
Then cover your head with your cloth.

The proverb alludes to the evening worship at the temple, when, on account of the evening chills, it is best to cover the head. চাপৰ (chápar) here means the clapping of hands by a number of people all together. The "chápar" is the principal accompaniment to the singing of religious hymns (nám). The "chápar" accompaniment is varied at intervals by the clashing of "tál" (cymbals) and by the beating of large drums.

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170. *Bhakats.*

ভকতহৈ কলও ন পকাই ।

Bhakathei kalo na pakái.

Bhakats don't even cook plantains.

This means that, although a dainty feeder, the "bhakat" is above cooking even such delicacies as plantains.

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171. *Bhakats.*

নাকত লাগিল পাক ।
মহা ভকতৰ চিদ্ৰ লাগিল ।
মেধি পাতিম কাক ।

Nákat lágil pák.
Mahá bhakatar chidra lágil.
Medhi pátim kák.

An unexpected thing has happened;
The head bhakat has been found fault with,
Whom shall I make a medhi?

The saying is ironically meant. The head "bhakat" is next to the gosain, the most powerful person at the Sastra. He is a person

who is generally supposed to be above suspicion. A মেধি is a person of much less importance, being only the gosain's agent at a village. These medhis are entitled to receive, I believe, a small portion of the offerings or of the gosain's "kar," or tax, as commission for collecting the same. These officers exist all over Assam, and through them the gosain and the bhakats at the Sastra keep touch with the people. Medhis are sometimes known by the title of "shastola." There are also ranks of medhis, *e.g.*, "bor" medhi (head medhi) and ráj medhi (the chief officer of the gosain outside the Sastra). Medhis at village feasts generally receive what is called মান (mán), which literally means honour or obedience. The "mán," however, often takes a more tangible form in the way of a gift of an earthenware "kalsi" (vessel) and a páti (mat) by the man who gives the feast.

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172. *Bhakats (of Kamlábári).*

আগৰ কমলাবৰিয়াই ধুই খাই খৰি।
এতিয়াৰ কমলাবৰিয়াই নো ধোৱে ভৰি।

Ágar Kamlábariyái dhui khái khari.
Etiár Kamlábariyái no dhowe bhari.

The Kamlábári "bhakats" of former days used to wash firewood before they cooked with it.
The Kamlábári "bhakats" of the present day don't even wash their feet.

This saying means that the "bhakats" of this Sastra used to be so punctilious, that they washed firewood before cooking with it, for fear that it might have been defiled by the touch of some person. Now-a-days the "bhakats" do not even take the trouble to wash their feet before eating; washing of not only the feet, but the whole body, before eating being the strict custom of all Hindus.

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173. *Bhot.*

ৰজাৰ ধন ভোট গিৰিহত।

Rajár dhan bhot girihat.

The rent-collector is the owner of the king's wealth.

ভোট is the old name for rent-collector. In the days of the rájás, the revenue was farmed out to "bhots," who paid the rájá a certain sum annually, and made as much out of the ryots as they could.

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174. *Bhuiyas.*

ফটা হোক চিঙ্গা হোক পাটৰ টঙ্গালি ।
সৰু হোক বুৰা হোক ভুঞাৰ পোৱালি ।

Phatá hok chingá hok pátar tangáli.
Sharú hok burá hok bhuiyár powáli.

Let it be torn, let it be broken, it is still a scarf of fine silk.
Let him be young, let him be old, he is still the son of a Bhuiyá.

পাট (pát) is a fine kind of Assamese silk, obtained from the cocoons of a worm that feeds on the mulberry tree. The best descriptions of this kind of silk are to be obtained in the Jorhát subdivision of the Sibságar district.

টঙ্গালি is either a scarf or waistcloth. These are often made of "pát" or "mezankuri" silk, and are embroidered with red, or even very occasionally with gold thread.

ভুঞা.—Bhuiyas were, as their name implies, landholders, the word ভুঞা being derived from ভুঁই or ভূমি (land). Bronson says they were "rájbangshi," or of the royal family. They were, in addition to being landholders, entitled to certain privileges granted them in consideration for their performing certain judicial functions; apparently, they were attached to the chief courts of justice in the times of the rájás, and they acted as umpires or arbitrators in civil suits. Robinson mentions in his "Assam" the "Báro Bhuiya," or 12 Bhuiyas. With reference to this proverb it will be interesting to compare Christian's Bihar proverb—

Báp ke put sipáhi ke ghoṛa,
Nau to thoram thorá.

Which Christian translates—

"A chip of the old block,
like the steed of the trooper,
If he is not up to very much, still he is above the average."

175 *Borás.*

বৰাৰ ঘৰত তৰাৰ গাঁঠি, বৰাট থাকিব কেই ৰাতি ।

Barár gharat tarár gáthi, barát thákiba kei ráti.

In the Borá's house the walls are fastened with "tará;"
How many nights will the Borá live in it.

বৰা (borá).—A "borá" was an inferior officer appointed by the Assam kings over 20 peons. The borá apparently looked after road-making and other public works, and used to move from place to place; hence the saying "thákiba kei ráti" (how many nights will he remain).

তৰা (tará) or তৰাপাত is the wild cardamom, which elephants are very fond of. The walls and roofs of temporary huts are frequently made of তৰা (tará).

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176. *Brahmins.*

বামুনে সগুনে বিচাৰে মৰা ।
গনকে বিচাৰে নৰিযা পৰা ।

Bámune shagune bichâre mará.
Ganake bichâre nariyá pará.

The Brahmin and the vulture look out for corpses.
The ganak is on the look-out from the time a person is taken ill.

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177. *Brahmins.*

বাপুৰ বাঁহ জোপায় মাৰলি ।

Bápur bá(n)h jopái márali.

Is the ridge-pole of the Brahmin's house made of a bamboo?

The ridge-pole of the house is generally made of more lasting wood than bamboo. It is only the poor who have to use a bamboo for the purpose. A Brahmin is sure to have the best of every thing, and it is not likely that he will be satisfied with a bamboo. বাপু is really the respectful address of a man to a Brahmin.

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178. *Brahmins.*

ময় আছিলো ধাৰি বৈ,
মোক আনিলে বামুনটো কৈ ।

Moy áchilo dhári boi,
Mok ánile Bámunto koi.

I was combing my beard,
And he brought me heie, calling me a Brahmin.

Perhaps this is intended for joke, as Brahmins in Assam don't have beards, as a rule.

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179. *Mahangs.*

ধন মহঙ্গলৈ গল লোন ভাৰ পেলাই,
মাটি ভাৰ অনিলে ঘৰ মাচিবলৈ হল ।

Dhan mahangaloi gal lon bhár pelái,
Máti bhár anile ghar máchibaloi hal.

His wealth has gone to the Mahang.
So he threw down his load of salt
and set about plastering his house.

The proverb perhaps means that the mahangs having exhausted all the supplies of the house, the master at last had time to think of something else besides feeding them, and was able to plaster his house. Possibly the proverb, however, means that the householder said that his wealth had gone in feeding the mahangs, but notwithstanding this, he was able to buy a load of salt, in which case there is an ironical meaning. মহঙ্গ (mahang) a class of religious mendicants.

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180. *Miris.*

তিৰিক মিলে, মিৰি কিলে ।

Tirik mile, Miri kile.

When the Miri meets his wife he beats her.

I should doubt if this is true of the Miri husband, as a rule, and there is no need to suppose that the Miri wife needs chastisement any more than her Assamese sister, although the Miri beats his wife when she deserves it. Miri women have, however, often plenty of muscle, and would be apt to turn the tables on their husbands if roughly handled.

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181. *The Máhánta.*

মহন্তৰ চিন মাহনিত, বুৰা গৰুৰ চিন ঘাঁহনিত ।

Mahantar chin máhanit, burá garur chin ghá(n)hanit.

The tracks of the Mahanta are in the "mátikalai" field,
and those of the old bullock are in the meadow.

The Mahanta, who like the gosain, is a spiritual guide, takes his tithe in kind as often as in money; this accounts for his tracks being found in the field of "mátikalai."

মাহনি (máhani) is a field of "mah," which is a black "dál" or pulse. The latter part of the proverb means that an old bullock, when it is past work, is turned out to graze.

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182. *Mariyás.*

মবিয়াক কেলেই ধান, গবিযাক কেলেই কান।

Mariyák kelei dhán, Gariyák kelei kán?

Why should a Mariyá have paddy,
or a Gariyá be allowed to keep his ears?

মবিযা (Mariyá).—The Mariyás are braziers. They are, as a rule, much looked down upon. They are professedly Muhammadans, but are quite ignorant of the tenets of Islam really. Possibly, they are converts from Hinduism, which may account for the contempt with which they are held by Hindus. গবিয়া (gariyá).—This term, as stated before, is meant to be one of opprobrium, but in reality it is nothing of the sort. গবিয়া means a man from "Gaur" (a city in Bengal), that formerly existed. The Assamese Muhammadans say they are a relict of the Muhammadan invasion. In the times of the rájás, they were much oppressed, but their status has much improved of late years.

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183. *Nágas.*

নাগিনীয়ে লবা পাই, নগায় জাল খাই।

Náginíe lará pái, nagái jál khái.

The Nága's wife gives birth to a child,
the Nága drinks the medicine.

জাল (jál) is the Hindustáni jhál, a preparation of hot spices taken by women after delivery.

নগা (nagá) or নাগা (nágá) is a generic term, which includes a number of large and powerful hill tribes.

184. *Thieves.*

চোৰ পোৰ মুখ খাঁনিহে ।

Chor por mukh khánihe.

The stock in trade of a thief is his appearance.

There are two kinds of thieves is Assam—the thief in the ordinary sense of the word, and the চোৱালি চোৰ (chowáli chor), or the stealer of young women. Marriage by capture still exists in Assam, indeed, amongst the lower classes; this is by no means uncommon. A young man singles out a girl at the "bihu" festival, who is perhaps not insensible to his attentions, and, when opportunity offers, elopes with her. This is called চোৱালি চোৰি (chowáli chori), or the stealing of young women. In this way the bridegroom escapes the payment of money or presents to the girl's parents. Hence this proverb "The stock in trade of a thief is his appearance."

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185. *Thieves.*

বোপাই আছিল চোৰ, সেই পৰকিতি মোৰ ।

Bopái áchil chor, shei parkiti mor.

My father was a thief, I am of the same nature.

cf.—No. 158—বাপেক জেনে পিতেক তেনে (Bápek jene pitek tene).

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186. *Thieves.*

জোৰ ও জোৰ বিপৰিত জোৰ,
এটী কানকতা এটী চোৰ ।

Jor o jor biparit jor,
Etí kánkatá etí chor.

A couple, a dissimilar couple;
One has cropped ears and the other is a thief.

The use of বিপৰিত is here ironical. কানকতা (kánkatá) literally with ears that have been cut off. It was the custom in the times of the rájás to cut off the ears of thieves and other offenders.

CLASS IV.

PROVERBS RELATING TO SOCIAL AND MORAL SUBJECTS, RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS, AND POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS.

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187. *Betelnut.*

সৰুকৈ কাটিবা, ঘনকৈ খাবা,
সেই তামোলৰ বিলাহ চাবা ।

Sarukoi kátibá, ghankoi khábá,
Shei támolar biláh chábá.

Cut it small and eat it thick,
And enjoy the betelnut.

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188. *Betelnut.*

কটাৰি চিকোন গুৱা, তোপনি চিকোন পুৱা ।

Katári chikon gũá, topani chikon puá.

A sharp knife for betelnut.
To sleep in the early morning is pleasant.

The Assamese is fond of sleeping as late as he can in the early morning, especially in cold or wet weather. গুৱা (guá) is another name for তামোল (támoḷ), the betelnut.

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189. *Bihu.*

সাত বিহুৰ সয়া কনি. ।

Shát bihur shayá kani.

An egg that has survived seven Bihus.

There are three Bihus, the Choit, Ḳártik, and Mágh Bihus. They are held on the last days of the months just enumerated. The Choit Bihu is a very pretty festival, the Assamese women coming out in their best clothes and jewellery, and with sprays of orchid in their hair. They dance and sing under the trees of the forest in imitation of the Gopis of Brindában. No man is supposed to go near to them, but this festival nevertheless results in many runaway matches. Cows are bathed in the rivers, and sometimes painted at this

festival. The Kártik Bihu is a much smaller festival, and has no peculiar customs that I can recall. The Mágh Bihu is an important feast, as it is the harvest-home. By the end of Mágh (the middle of February) all the rice has been gathered in, and if the season has been a good one, there is much rejoicing Large piles of wood are made, and at night a light is put to them, when they blaze up and make grand bonfires.

The Assamese play a game with eggs at these festivals. Two men each take an egg and push them point to point at one another. The egg that breaks is beaten, and the unbroken one wins. This custom is referred to in the proverb above, and is called কনিজুজা [kanijujá]. In the old days there used to be buffalo fights, and even elephant fights, at the Bihu.

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190. *Brahminical thread.*

বাহিত নিদিবা হাত,
লৰা চোৱালি লঘোনে নথবা
দিবা গুধলিতে ভাত।

Ráhit nidibá hát,
Lará chowáli laghone nathabá.
Dibá gudhalite bhát.

Don't touch anything stale.
Don't delay in giving your children the sacred thread.
Give cooked rice in the evening.

ৰাহিত (ráhit) = cooked rice of the day before, which is stale and nasty. লঘোন (laghon) = Bengali পৈতা (poitá), the sacred thread. It is the custom amongst the higher castes to invest a child with the sacred thread when it reaches a certain age.

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191. *Busy-bodies.*

লগনী নহলে জুই নজলে,
তুতকীয়া নহলে গাঁও নবহে।

Laganí nahale jui najale,
Tutakíyá nahale gáo(n) nabahe.

Without kindling wood the fire won't light,
And without a busybody no village can be established.

192. *Childless Woman.*

জাৰ নাই কেছুৱা বুঢ়াকে নচুৱা।

Jár nái kechhuwá buṛáke nachhuá.

She who has not a baby to dandle, should make her old man dance.

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193. *Cutting off the nose.*

নিজৰ নাক কাটি সতিনীৰ যাত্ৰা ভঙ্গ।

Nijar nák káti shatinír játrá bhanga.

She cut off her own nose, so as to prevent her husband's second wife from starting on a journey.

One wife, out of jealousy, because her husband's second wife is going out for the day, slits her own nose, so as to prevent her starting. The Assamese have a superstition that if anything mutilated or deformed is seen when setting out on a journey, the journey will be unlucky. সতিনী (shatiní) or সতিয়৷ (shatiyoi) = one of the several wives of one husband. Polygamy brings many evils ; not the least of these evils is the jealousy that nearly always exists between the wives, which results in continual squabbles. *cf.*—the following translations of Eastern sayings :

Malay.—"Two wives under one roof : two tigers in one cage."

Telegu.—"Two swords cannot be contained in one scabbard."

Afghan.—"Who likes squabbles at home, contracts two marriages."

Tamul.—"Why fire the house of a man who has two wives ?" *i.e.*, the fire of anger and jealousy is enough.

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194. *Cutting off the nose.*

নাক কাটিলে আহিব দালে পালে,
চুলি কাটিলে আহিব কোন কালে ?
Nák kátile áhiba dále pále,
Chuli kátile áhiba kon kále ?

If the nose is cut off, it will regain its old size by treatment,
But if the hair is cut off, when will it come again ?

Mr. Abdul Majid explains this proverb by the following little story :—Once upon a time there was an Assamese king, who sentenced a man to have his nose cut off, mutilation being a common punishment in the times of the rájás. Some one, who was a friend of the man under sentence, advised the king to cut off the man's hair instead of his nose, as the hair would not grow again, whereas the nose would soon regain its former size with treatment. The king believed the adviser, and so the prisoner got off with having his hair cropped.

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195. *Daughters.*

কথাত কথা বাঢ়ে, খড়িকাত বাঢ়ে কান,
মাকৰ ঘৰত জীয়ৰি বাঢ়ে, পথাৰত বাঢ়ে ধান ।

Kathát kathá báṛe, khaṛikát báṛe kán,
Mákar gharat jíwari báṛe, pathárat báṛe dhán.

A story grows by telling, a bit of straw makes the hole in the ear larger;
A girl grows up best at her mother's house ; paddy grows best on the pathár.

খড়িকা means a grass tooth-pick, a roasting spit, or a spire of dry grass to which the eggs of "mugá" silkworms are attached. Here it is used in its first sense, the tooth-pick being used to make the hole, bored through the lobe of the ear, bigger. Both men and women wear earrings, called thuriá (থুৰিযা), which are nearly always cylindrically-shaped bits of amber, with a gold knob at the end, which shows in front. As these "thuriá" are often of considerable diameter, a large hole is required in the ear. The best way to widen the hole, is to put in an additional bit of straw (খড়িকা) each time this is possible. The proverb is an answer to the question—Where do things thrive best ?

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196. *Daughters.*

টিক বলদ ওলাই মাটি, মাক ভালেয জীয়েক জাতি ।

Tik balad olái máti, mák bháleye jíyek játi.

A good bullock comes when it is called; if a mother is good the daughter is the same.

197. *Daughters.*

মাকত কৈ জীয়েক কাজী, ঢেকী ঠোৰা লৈ বাতে পাঁজি।

Mákat koi jíyek kájí, dhekí thora loi báte pá(n)ji.

The daughter is more skilful than the mother (forsooth).
There is an obstacle in the road to the "dheki"!

The proverb means that the daughter makes herself out more clever than her mother, but she excuses herself from working the "dheki" (paddy-husker), the principal work of the house.

পাঁজি is a pointed bamboo stake driven into the ground with the object of wounding foot-passengers. The Nágas and other hill tribes place "panjis" round their villages to guard against sudden attack.

198. *Daughters.*

তই মাকৰ জী, মই জাকৰ জী,
তপত ভাতত চেচা কৰো,
হেচা পোতোস দি।

Toi mákar jí, moi jákar jí,
Tapat bhátat chechá karo,
Hechá potosh di.

You are your mother's daughter,
And I am a daughter of so and so.
Do you think I make hot cooked rice cool by pressing against it and squeezing it?

The latter half of the saying is interrogative.

199. *Dheki.*

ঢেকি সাল ফুৰিলে খুদৰ কি আকাল।

Dheki shál phurile khudar ki ákál.

The paddy-husker has gone away, what a dearth of broken rice (refuse) there will be!

200. *Father.*

বাপুৰ গাত বাৰ্হনি লাগিল।

Bápur gát bárhani lágil.

The broom has touched father's body!

A dire misfortune, as the broom is always unclean. বাপু (bápu) is a respectful form of address for either a father or a Brahmin.

201. *Fisherman.*

ডোম ছহকি হল চুকত পাতিলে ডুলি,
উলিয়াই পেলাই পেলাই গা সুঙ্সুঙাইছে বুলি।
Dom chhahaki hal chukat pátile duli,
Uliyái pelái pelái gá shungshungáiche buli.

A Dom became rich, and he placed in the corner of his house
a basket for storing paddy.
He then pulls the basket out, saying that he feels his body itching.

A Dom would not usually possess a "duli" for storing paddy, as he earns his bread by fishing. গা সুঙ্সুঙাই (gá shungshungái), literally to feel an itching in the body. The word is derived from সুঙ্=a bristle, a beard of a grain of paddy.

202. *Guitar.*

মানতহে টোকাৰী বাজে।
Mánathe tokárí báje.

Out of respect for him they play the tokárí.

টোকাৰী (tokárí) is an instrument of music played with the fingers like the guitar.

203. *Husband.*

এতিয়া পালেহি ঘৰ পতাপৈ,
কিলাবলৈ আহিছে খেৰ পেলাই দাললৈ।
Etiyá pálehi ghar patápoi,
Kilábaloi áhiche kher pelái dállaoi.

Now has come the worthy husband;
He drops the load of straw from off his shoulders
and wants to hurt me with the knife in his hand.

ঘৰ পতা (ghar patá) literally, he who has established the house. Here the wife is the speaker.

204. *Husband.*

কি কম কি নকম পৈৰ নাম বটালি।

Ki kam ki nakam poir nám batáli.

What to say and what not to say, my husband's name is "chisel."

A woman who has always to be corrected for making mistakes, gives vent to her wrath by saying that her husband's name is "chisel," *i.e.*, he has a tongue as sharp as a chisel.

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205. *Husband.*

কিহত কৰিলো কি, ধান এদোন দি,
পৈতো আনিলো নিতো কিলাই মাৰে।

Kihat karilo ki, dhán edon di,
Poito ánilo nito kilái máre.

What have I done to have bought a husband for a dun of paddy,
always beats me.

idegroom, as a rule, has to make presents to the marriage, so that in this proverb the order

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Husband.

খাব জানিলেই চাউলেই চিৰা,
বহিব জানিলে মাতিয়েই পিৰা,
বুলিব জানিলেই মজিয়াই দেড় প্ৰহৰ বাত।

Khába jánilei cháwolei chirá,
Bahiba jánilei mátiyei pirá,
Buliba jánilei mojiyái deṛ prahar bát.

(contentedly), common rice is "chirá" (washed rice).
ɔw to sit the ground is the stool.
ɔw to walk the dining-room is one and a half prahar's journey.

cooked rice is as good as "chirá." If
ɔund is as good as a chair. And if you

only know how to walk, it takes as long as a prahar and a half to cover the floor in your house. Slowness of gait in a woman is considered lady-like, as well as graceful. মজিয়া—মাজ কথালি (máj katháli), the middle room of the house, where the meals are served and eaten.

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207. *Husband.*

গিৰিয়েকে বোলে ভোক ভোক,
ঘৈনিয়েকে বোলে পুৱা গধূলি,
দুই সাজ একে লগে হোক।

Giriyeke bole bhok bhok,
Ghoiniyeke bole puá gadhuli,
Dui sháj eke lage hok.

The husband cries out "I am hungry," "I am hungry."
The wife replies "Let the morning meal and evening meal be taken together.

This is a case where the wife is too thrifty and half-starves her husband. The Assamese has, as a rule, three meals a day, *i.e.*, in the early morning, midday, and evening. In the early morning he eats cooked rice, either hot or cold, according to his fancy or his means. In the middle of the day he takes what is called জলপান (jalpán) or lunch, which often consists of পিঠাগুৰি (pitháguri) or cakes made from rice flour. In the evening is the large meal of the day; it consists of cooked rice, fish, or vegetables. (*See* No. 55.)

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208. *Husband.*

জালকে বুলিলে জকাই
আন্ধাৰে মুধাৰে চিনিব নোৱাৰি
পৈয়েকক বুলিলে ককাই।

Jálake bulile jakái,
Ándháre mudháre chiniba noári
Poiyekak bulile kakái.

The net was mistaken for a jakái,
And she called her husband "kakái" (elder brother) in the dark.

জাল (jál) is a fishing net, of which there are several kinds. The nets are made from a fibre called "riha," which is very strong. জকাই (jakái) is a scoop with a handle, which is pushed along in the mud by women to catch small fish. The jakái is made of split bamboo, with a whole bamboo for a handle, and is very light.

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209. *Learned.*

জনাৰ ভাত মাচ নজনাৰ সেইয়ে কলগ্ৰহ।

Janár bhát mách najanár sheiye kalagrah.

What is cooked rice and fish to the learned,
is an insurmountable difficulty to the unlearned.

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210. *Low birth.*

তোৰ জনম জাতি মই জানো।
কঠিয়া তলিত ঘৰ আছে।
এসাৰ চেৰেক ডিৰাই মাৰিবি লৰ।

Tor janam játi moi jáno.
Kathiyá talit ghar áche
Eshar cherek dirái máribi lar.

I know your lineage.
Your home is in the paddy nursery.
If I were to say a little more, you would run away.

এসাৰ (eshár) literally এটিকথা (etikathá) one word; ডিৰাই (dirái) literally to boast.

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211. *Lover.*

চাই খাবলৈ আহি বান্ধত পৰিল।

Chái khábaloi áhi bándhat paril.

He came only to have a look, but he got tied up.

The saying refers to the case of a man who has been carrying on an intrigue, but has been found out.

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212. *Maternal uncle.*

মোমায় মৰক, ভূতক পাচে পাম।

Momái marak, bhutak páche pám.

Let the uncle die, I will find the devil (ভূত) afterwards.

This is rather an amusing instance of "Shutting the stable-door after the steed has been stolen." The usual exorcism of the evil spirit is here dispensed with until after the man's death.

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213. *Marriage.*

এতাই বোৰ খোৰোচাতকৈ
বিযাৰ খোৰোচা সকত।

Etái bor khorochátkoi
Biyár khorochá shakat.

The slip-knot of marriage is the strongest slip-knot of all.

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214. *Mother-in-law.*

চল পাই বিয়নি নিতো তিনি বেলি।
Chal pái biyani nito tini beli.

If the mother-in-law gets a chance,
she comes to the house three times a day.

These words are put into the mouth of the daughter-in-law, who has to put up with a great deal of interference from her husband's mother.

বিয়নি (biyani) = শাহু (sháhu), mother-in-law.

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215. *Mother-in-law.*

শাহু বোৱাৰীৰ ঘৰ,
কোনে খাই গাখিৰৰ সৰ।

Sháhu bowárír ghar,
Kone khái gákhirar shar.

The mother-in-law is at her daughter-in-law's house,
Who is going to drink the cream?

This means that there will be a fight over it.

সৰ (shar) = চামনি (chámani), cream. সৰ (shar) is the same word really as the Bengali সাৰ (shár) very probably.

216. *Oil.*

ৰনত পৰি কলিয়া হলো,
তেল নাইকিয়াত ফপৰিয়া হলো।

Ranat pari kaliyá halo,
Tel náikiyát phapariyá halo.

I have become black through having fallen (wounded) in battle,
And I have become scurfy through having no oil.

A cooly whose skin has been tanned through exposure to the sun, says he has become black owing to being wounded on the field of battle. Having no oil to rub on the body is given as an excuse for his skin being scurfy. The Assamese rub their hair and body with নাৰিকল তেল (nárikal tel), cocoanut oil.

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217. *Old man.*

দেখিচাহে বুড়া অগ্নি কুৰা।

Dekhicháhe burá agni kurá.

He looks an old man, but in reality he is a flame of fire.

অগ্নি কুৰা (agnik urá) = জুই কুৰা (jui kurá), a torch. অগ্নি (agni), = Ignis (*Dowson*). To quote further from the same authority—"Fire is one of the most ancient and most sacred objects of Hindu worship. Agni is one of the chief deities of the Vedas. He is one of the three great deities—Agni, Váyu (Indra), and Surya—who respectively preside over earth, air, and sky."—(*Dowson.*)

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218. *Pohári.*

পোহাৰিৰ পৈয়েক সাখি।

Pohárir poiek shákhi.

The Pohári's witness is her husband.

This means that the only witness a Pohári can get, is her own husband owing to her poverty. Other people being able to pay for witnesses, have thus an advantage over her.

পোহাৰি (pohári) are petty traders.

219. *Porters.*

ভাৰিক নেৰে ভাৰে, জবৰাক নেৰে পচলা খাৰে ।

Bhárik nere bháre, jabarák nere pachalá khåre.

The burden does not leave the porter's back,
and potash (salt) does not leave the vegetables.

The above means that a porter cannot earn his livelihood without carrying loads, and vegetables cannot be eaten without salt.

পচলা খাৰ (pachalá khár)=potash obtained by burning plantain trees. In olden days potash, so obtained, was eaten in place of salt, which was not readily procurable. জবৰা (jabará)=greens boiled without salt.

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220. *Religion.*

ধৰ্ম্মৰ জয় অধৰ্ম্মৰ ক্ষয় ।

Dharmar jay adharmar khyay.

The victory of religion is the decline of wickedness.

ধৰ্ম্ম (dharma) is moral and religious duty. Dharma was an ancient sage, sometimes classed among the Prajápatis, the fathers of the human race, who were produced by Manu. Dharma married thirteen (or ten) of the daughters of Daksha, and had a numerous progeny, but all his children "are mainfestly allegorical, being personifications of intelligences and virtues and religious rites, and being, therefore, appropriately wedded to the probable authors of the Hindu code of religion and morals, or the equally allegorical representation of that code, Dharma."—(*Wilson.*)

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221. *Step-mother.*

কি কম মাহি আইৰ গুন,
এহাতে খাৰলি এহাতে লোন !

Ki kam máhi áir gun,
Eháte khárali eháte lon!

What shall I say of my step-mother's character!
In one hand she has chutney and in the other salt!

In former days salt was a luxury, and "khárali" is much appreciated as a relish to eat with boiled rice. For note on "khárali," see No. 103.

222. *Step-son.*

মোৰ পো নহয় সতিনিৰ পো,
ধাৰি নাই, পাটী নাই মাতিতে সো।

Mor po nahoy shatinir po,
Dhári nái, pátí nái mátite sho.

You are not my son, but a son of my fellow wife,
I have no "dhári" (rug) and no "pátí" (mat) for you,
you must sleep on the ground.

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223. *Stolen cattle.*

চোৰে নিয়া গৰুৰ বাতে বাতে ঘাহ।

Chore niyá garur báte báte gháh.

The stolen bullock finds grass along the road.

All roads in Assam have grass growing on the sides upon which the cattle graze as they go along.

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224. *Teacher.*

কেলেহুৱা ওজা চপনিয়া পালি,
ওৰে ৰাতি নাম গায় খেৰ জুই জালি।

Kelehuá ojá chapaniyá páli,
Ore ráti nám gáy kher jui jáli.

You uninvited teacher! you have found another
uninvited one (chapaniyá),
And have lit a fire and have sung hymns all night.

Ojá is also an exorcist. কেলেহুৱা চপনিয়া (kelehuá and chapaniyá) are contemptuous terms applied to one who wishes to associate with others without being asked. The term "chapaniyá" is usually applied to a bachelor living at the house of a man who has daughters, on the understanding that he is to get one of the daughters in marriage.

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225. *Urbashi.*

একে উৰ্ব্বশি দুৱাৰে পথ।

Eke Urbashi duwáre path.

The temple of Urbashi has but one door, and path leading up to it.

Urbashi, or Urvasi, was one of the Apsarases, the nymphs of Indra's heaven. The name "which signifies moving in the water, has some analogy to that of Aphrodite."—(*Dowson.*) The Rámáyana and the Puranas attribute the origin of these nymphs to the churning of the ocean.

There is a love story told in the Mahabhárata, which need not be reproduced here, concerning Urbashi and Puru-ravas, a mythical person, mentioned in the Vedas, connected with the sun and the dawn, and existing in the middle region of the universe. This story Maxmüller considers "one of the myths of the Vedas which expresses the correlation of the dawn and the sun. The love between the mortal and the immortal, and the identity of the morning dawn and the evening twilight, is the story of Urvasi and Puru-ravas." The word "Urvasi," Maxmüller says, "was originally an appellation and meant dawn." Dowson writes—"Dr. Goldstücker's explanation differs, but seems more apposite. According to this Puru-ravas is the sun and Urvasi is the morning mist; when Puru-ravas is visible, Urvasi vanishes, as the mist is absorbed when the sun shines forth." I am indebted to Mr. Abdul Majid, Extra Assistant Commissioner of Gauháti, for the following note:—"It is believed that certain stones which stand between the Umanand rocks (Peacock island) and the Koromonasa rocks, are Urbashi herself transformed into a stone [near these stones are at present a white column, called the 'Light House.........']." Mr. Majid then adds that the people of Gauháti call the Umanand rocks "Urpokhi," which is said to be a corruption of Urbasi. The name "Urpokhi," *i.e.*, one flying hither and thither, as applied to the courtezan, Urbashi would seem to be a fitting one.

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226. *Village conversation.*

ঢেকিয়া লতা পতা,
ভাত খাওতে পানি খাই,
সিও এটা কথা।

Dhekiyá latá patá,
Bhát káote páni khái,
Shio etá kathá.

Bits of fern, creepers, and leaves.
He drinks water whilst eating rice.
These are the subjects of conversation.

This is a description of village talk.

227. *Water Sprite.*

খাল খানি জসিনী চপাই ললে ।

Khál kháni jashiní chapái lale.

By digging a drain (near your house)
you have brought the evil spirit closer.

The jashiní is one of the *du minores* of the Assamese. Although the "jashiní" is supposed to be evilly disposed, apparently it does not require to be propitiated by offerings. The "jashiní" presides over tanks and drains. Stories are told by the villagers of men who had been pulled down into the depths of deep pools by "jashinís," and so drowned whilst bathing.

228. *Water Sprite.*

থলত থল ৰজা পোতা পুখুৰিৰ বাকেঁয় ৰজা ।

Thalat thal rajá potá pukhurir bákeye rajá.

A king reigns on land, in half-filled-up tanks reigns the water sprite.

থল (thal) = Sanskrit স্থল (sthal), land, place. পোতা পুখুৰি (potá pukhuri), literally buried tank. What is meant generally by the expression, however, is a tank in process of being filled up. বাঁক [ba(n)k] is an evil spirit said to haunt swamps and marshes. The ba(n)k, like the will o'the whisp, leads people astray at night.

229. *Widower.*

জোৰ পোৰি বৰলাৰ হাত পালে হি ।

Jor pori baralár hát pále hi.

The torch burnt down to the hand of the widower that held it.

Mr. Abdul Majid notes on this—"When a man loses his wife and becomes a widower (baralá), he is so immersed in grief that, when he lights a torch he lets it burned his hand in his absence of mind."

230. *Widower.*

ঠন ঠন মদন গোপাল, একেটা বৰলাৰ নখন চোতাল ।
Than than Madan Gopál, eketá baralár nakhan chotál.

He is alone by himself a "Madan Gopál" (a widower),
he possesses nine courtyards (and houses to correspond).

মদন গোপাল (Madan Gopál) is either a bachelor or a widower. মদন (Madan) is one of the names of কাম (Kámá), the Indian cupid.
(Gopál), cowkeeper, a name of the youthful Krishna whilst living amongst the cowherds in Brindában.

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231. *Widower.*

পর্ব্বতত কাচকনি ভৈয়ামত বান,
বৰলা বিচাৰিচে স্থকান ধান ।
Parbatat káchakani bhoyámat bán,
Baralá bicháriche shukán dhán.

To look for turtle's eggs in the hills, to put up a weir
(across a stream) in the plains,
Are as difficult things to do as for a widower (to obtain) dry paddy.

In the proverb just above, we have some of the advantages of widowerhood. In this proverb we have one of the disadvantages. বাণ (bán) is a weir thrown across a stream to prevent the fish finding their way out to the Brahmaputra. Such weirs are difficult to put up, and still more difficult to keep in place, as the streams are liable to rise suddenly and wash them away. Turtle's eggs are found on the sandhills alongside rivers. They are difficult to find unless the turtle is seen making its way off from the place where the eggs have been deposited.

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232. *Wives: The contrary wife.*

খোজো খাৰলি দিয়ে লোন,
এনে উভতিত থাকিব কোন।
Khojo khárali diye lon,
Ene ubhatit thákiba kon.

I ask for chutney and she gives me salt !
Who can stand a wife who is so contrary ?

For note on খাৰলি (khárali), see No. 103.

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233. *The wife who is a hasty cook.*

খৰ ৰান্ধনি খৰ বাঢ়নি পৈয়েক লঘোনে জাই,
ওদা ৰান্ধনি ওদা বাঢ়নি পৈয়েক তিনি সাজি খাই ।

Khar rándhani khar bárani poiek laghone jái,
Odá rándhani odá bárani poiek tini shájı khái.

A hasty cook and a hasty broom, and the husband goes fasting,
A slow cook and a slow broom, and the husband eats three meals a day.

A hasty cook often spoils what she is cooking. A hasty broom makes a lot of dust. A cook who takes time and trouble, prepares a satisfactory meal. A broom that does its work in a systematic manner, makes little dust. খৰ (khar) = literally quick, dry, parched. ওদা (odá) = soft, not over-roasted.

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234. *The wife supreme in her own house.*

ঘৰে পতি ঘৈনি, খালে পতি জসিনি ।

Ghare pati ghoini, khále pati jashini.

In the home the wife is supreme, in the ditch reigns the water sprite.

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235. *A wife who, though well-meaning, is without tact.*

তিনি গধূলিত তৰিচে তাত,
উজুটিত চিঙ্গিলে পৈয়েকৰ দাঁত ।

Tini gadhulit tariche tát,
Ujutit chingile poiekar dá(n)t.

For three evenings she has been spreading her loom,
But by mistake she has broken her husband's tooth.

তাত (tát) is the wooden hand-loom used by Assamese women for weaving cotton or silk.

236. *The shrew.*

পাৰ কৰ জুবলা গাঁয় নাথাৱৰে।

Pár kar jubalá gáy náthá̱ware.

Cross me over (the stream), stupid. I am so tired.

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237. *The spoilt wife.*

বেটিয়ে ভাঙ্গিলে কটৰা, গড়গাঁও পালেহি বতৰা,
ঘৈনীয়ে ভাঙ্গিলে কাঁহি, ঠলে মুচুকাই হাঁহি।

Beṭiye bhángile katará, Gaṛgáo pálehi batará,
Ghoiníye bhángile ka(n)hi, thale muchukái há(n)hi.

The maid-servant broke a cocoanut shell, and the news spread to Gargáo.
The wife broke a brass plate, and the result was only a smile
(from her husband).

কটৰা (katará) is a half cocoanut shell used as a cup by the poor, or as a lid for a vessel. গড়গাঁও [Gargáo(n)], Nazira, was at one time the capital of the Ahom rájás.

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238. *The old wife and the young wife.*

সৰুৰ দায় পিচলি জাই, বৰৰ দায় খুচৰি খাই।

Sarur dáy pichali jái, barar dáy khuchari khái.

Through the young wife's mistake he slips down,
But when the old wife makes a mistake, he stirs up the mud.

The case of a man who has two wives, an old one and a young one, is meant.

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239. *The stingy wife.*

বিধতায় দিলেও তিৰুতাই নিদিয়ে।

Bidhatáy dileo tirutái nidiye.

Although Bidhatá gave, the wife does not!

বিধতা (Bidhatá) is Brahmá, the law-giver.

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240. *The wife always beautiful.*

মাজ মুৰত নাই চুলি, পৈয়েক মাতে ৰূপহি বুলি।

Máj murat nái chuli, poiyek máte rupahi buli.

She has no hair on the middle of her head, but her husband
calls her "rupahi" (the beautiful one).

241. *A paragon of a wife.*

সৰ্ব্ব সুলক্ষনী তাই, পাটিটো মুতে চুৰুটো খাই।

Shaiba shulakhyaní tái, pátito mute churuto khái.

A paragon of a wife, she spoils the bed and eats from the cooking pot.

The proverb is of course ironical.

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242. *Women.*

তিৰিৰ চুতি বাঢনিৰ বুতি।

Tirir chuti báṛanir buti.

Women that are short in stature, are like brooms that are worn out.

The Assamese think a great deal of a tall woman.

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243. *Women.*

তিৰৰ, মিৰি, ভাটৌ, কোৱা,
এই তিনি চাৰি আস নো পোৱা।

Tirir, Miri, bháto, kowá,
Ei tini chári ásh no powá.

Of women, Miris, the parot and the crow,
The minds of these four you cannot know.

Assamese never trust women. In this they do not differ from the people of the rest of India, who have a very low idea of the sex. Miris are always supposed to be very deceitful. To me personally they have always appeared very simple, but perhaps I have been taken in. The words "bháto" and "kowá" have been inserted for purposes of rhyme.

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244. *Women.*

ঠুপৰীৰ পৈ, মাজে ফুটা চৈ, কাতি খাই কটনা,
এই তিনি চাৰি জমৰ জতনা।

Thuparír poi, máje phutá choi, káti khái kataná,
Ei tini chári jamar jataná.

To be the husband of a worthless woman, a cart-covering
with a hole in the middle of it, a hired weaver,
These three are the agony of death.

In Assam, the bullock carts are covered with hoods made of matting, with bamboo hoops to support it. Any one who has travelled in a bullock cart with a hole in its hood on a wet night in the rains, will endorse the truth of this saying. A hired weaver is very troublesome on account of her bad work. কটনা (katanā) = বেচলৈ লোকৰ শুতা কটা বা কাপৰ বোৱা মানুহ।—(*Bronson*). (Bechaloi lokar shutá katá bá kápar bowá mánush). One who spins or weaves for others for hire. For note on জম (jam), see No. 24.

Class V.

PROVERBS RELATING TO AGRICULTURE AND SEASONS.

245. *The brinjal out of season.*

আবতৰীয়া বেঙ্গেনাৰ মোক তোল মোক তোল কৰে।

Ábataríyá bengená mok tol mok tol kare.

The egg plant that is out of season, cries out "pluck me," "pluck me."

This saying is expressive of contempt towards men who are too pushing.

246. *The "bagari" plum.*

উলুৰ লগত বগৰি পৰিল।

Ulur lagat bagari paril.

The wild plum is found in the 'ulu' grass.

পৰিল (literally) fell. In "ulu" grass jungle the "bagari," or wild plum, is frequently found.

247. *"Dhán" and "pán."*

এক আহিনে ধান,
তিনি শাঁওনে পান।

Ek Áhine dhán,
Tini Sháwone pán.

In one Áhin dhán,
In three Sháwons pán.

The transplanted rice begins to come into ear in Áhin, about 15th September to 15th October. The paddy is not ripe, however, till well on in December or beginning of January. The pán, however, takes three years to mature. (According to the proverb, the month of Sháwon is from about 15th July to 15th August.)

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248. *"Pán."*

একে গচৰ পান সি কি হব আন ।

Eke gachar pán shi ki haba án.

It is "pán" from the same tree, how will it be different.

The saying means he is a "chip of the old block," how will he be different to his father ?

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249. *Paddy.*

কুমলিয়া ভৰিত ধান,
সুঙ্গে ফুটিলৈ ফুৰে আতাহ পাৰি ।

Kumaliyá bharit dhán,
Shunge phutiloi phure átáh pári.

If the man who treads out the paddy has soft feet,
The sharp beard of the ear pierces his foot and he jumps with pain.

The paddy is generally trodden out by oxen, but sometimes by men and women as well. If a person has soft feet, *i.e.*, a man not accustomed to such work, the sharp beard of the paddy runs into his foot.

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250. *Paddy seedlings.*

কঠিয়া হে চুতি জেঠতে পৰা ।

Khathiyá he chuti Jethate pará.

The paddy seedlings are small, but they were sown in Jeth.

The seedlings referred to are those which are required for transplanting to the "rua" or paddy-field. The month Jeth corresponds to 15th May to 15th June, which is about the time when the "kathiyá thalis" (seedling beds) are prepared and the seed sown.

251. *Ploughs.*

গধুলি হলে সাত সাল বাই,
পুৱা হলে এ হালো নাই ।

Gadhuli hale shát shál bái,
Puá hale e hálo nái.

In the evening he has seven ploughs going,
In the early morning he has not one.

The proverb illustrates the case of a man who, although ignorant of agriculture altogether, pretends that he is doing a great deal of it. The Assamese never ploughs in the evening, at least not unless he can possibly help it. A ploughman's day is generally from dawn till about 11 or 12 o'clock. After that he lets his bullocks loose, and does no more that day.

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252. *Radish.*

জি মুলা বাড়িব দুপাততে চিন ।

Ji mulá báṛiba dupátate chin.

The radish that will grow large, you will know when it has spread but two leaves.

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253. *Jack fruit.*

ধান পুৰিয়া কঠাল পাতৰ তলতে লুকাল ।

Dhán puriyá kathál pátar talate lukál.

The biggest jack fruit of all, *i.e.*, that one worth a *purá* of dhán, lay hidden underneath the leaves.

This proverb is applied to those who hide their light under a bushel. This proverb should more properly have come under Class I or Class II.

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254. *Náhar.*

নাহৰত কৈও সুকাঠি ।

Náharat koio shukáthi.

There is better wood than the Náhar even.

255. *Choit.*

পালে হি চত ধান থম কত ।

Pále hi Chat dhán tham kat.

The month of Choit has arrived,
when am I going to store the paddy ?

Here চত=চৈত (Choit). The month of Chat or Choit is from about the 15th March to the 15th April, or about a full month before the commencement of the ploughing season. This is a case of a man counting his chickens before they are hatched. Paddy is not carried, and certainly not garnered, until well on in December.

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256. *Mangœs.*

পকা আমৰ বেলিকা কিহৰ কুজা মোহা ।

Paká ámar beliká kihar kujá mohá.

Now is the time for ripe mangœs,
How can you be bent double with care any longer, uncle ?

The time for mangos to ripen is about June ; but as mangœs are always full of worms in Assam, it is difficult to understand the enthusiastic tone of the proverb.

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257. *"Máh" or "Mátikelái."*

ফাল কাততেই মাহৰ বতৰ গল ।

Phál kátatei máhar batar gal.

Whilst he was cutting the plough-share,
the time for máh-sowing passed away.

"Máh" or "mátikelái" is a kind of black *dál*, much eaten by the Assamese. Máh is sown at the end of the rains and is reaped in the cold weather. The ফাল (phál) is the plough-share, which is very often made of wood hardened with fire, sometimes even it is only a bamboo.

258. *Seluk.*

বুৰে পতি শেলুক নে।

Bure pati sheluk ne.

Do you find a "seluk" each time you dive ?

The "seluk" is the edible root of ভেট (bhet), a kind of lotus, which grows in *bils.* The ভেট (bhet) is something similar to the "singhára."

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259. *The Bor tree.*

বৰ গচ কাটিলে ঘিতিঙ্গাই কৰিলে,
চিতিকি পৰিলে এঠা।
লোকক দেখুৱাই কেতেৰাই মাতিবা,
ভিতৰি নেৰিবা বেথা।

Bar gach kátile ghitingái karile,
Chitiki parile ethá.
Lokak dekhuwái keterái mátibá,
Bhitari neribá bethá.

When the "bor" tree was cut down, it fell with a crash,
And its juice poured out like rain.
Before people speak to him sharply,
In private you should make much of him.

The first part of the proverb is irrelevant to the second, which, as being a piece of advice to some one, should more properly have been detailed in Class II. ঘিতিঙ্গাই (ghitingái) = an onomatopœic word, signifying any sudden sound, as a clap of thunder—(*Bronson*). চিতিকি (চিটিকি) "chitiki," literally, driving in like heavy rain through an open window. বৰ গচ (Bar gach) = বট গচ, the Indian fig (*Ficus indica*). These trees grow to an enormous size in Assam, notably the "Feseng Bor gach" near Difflu in Golághát.

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260. *The kerelá.*

বাৰে হাত কেৰেলাৰ তেৰে হাত গুটি।

Báre hát kerelár tere hát guti.

The kerelá is 12 cubits long, but the seeds are thirteen !

The "kerelá" is the "*Momordica carantia,*" a well-known vegetable. (Bengali কৰলা, karlá). The saying is applied to a man

who draws the long bow. The proverb should more properly find place under Class I.

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261. *On buying land*

মাটী কিনিবা মাজ খাল,
চোৱালী আনিবা মাক ভাল ।
Máti kinibá máj khál.
Chowálí ánibá mák bhál.

Buy land which slopes towards the centre,
And marry a girl whose mother is good.

cf.—"Take a vine of a good soil and a daughter of a good mother."

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262. *Paddy cultivation.*

গৰু চাবা গধুলি ৰোৱা চাবা পুৱা ।
জকাই বাওতে চোৱালি চাবা দেখি কেনে কুৱা ।
Garu chábá gadhuli rowá chábá puwá.
Jakái báote chowáli chábá dekhi kene kuwá.

Look for your bullocks in the evening,
look at your paddy-field in the morning.
Have a peep at the girl who is fishing with the "jakái,"
and see what she is like.

The Assamese lets his bullocks roam about after midday, when he has finished ploughing. In the evening he ties them up, so as to be ready to commence ploughing as soon as it is light. The second part of the proverb is irrelevant, although amusing.

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263. *On making seedling-beds.*

সিচাতকৈ চেৰা ধৰাৰ টান ।
Shichátkoi cherá dharár tán.

The plot that has been abandoned is harder to prepare
than that which has been sprinkled (with water).

The Assamese ryot always has a small plot of land near his house, where he makes his paddy nursery. The ground is first of all well ploughed, and then water is sprinkled all over the surface with a "lahani" (bamboo scoop) until the earth becomes liquid mud. Then the "kathiyá" is sown. Naturally, a plot which has

thus been prepared, is easier to work than the চেৰা ধৰা (cherá dhará), the plot which has been allowed to lie fallow.

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264. *A fence.*

নিত চাৰনে তাতি ।

Nita chárane táti.

A fence always requires looking after.

The Assamese fence in their "ruwá," the paddy-fields, after the "kathiyá" (seedlings) has been transplanted, the fences are made of split bamboo, and are constantly either being stolen and used for firewood, or broken down by stray cattle.

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265. *Pepper, pán and plantains.*

জালুকত গোবৰ পানত মাটী ।
কলা পুলী ৰুবা তিনিবাৰ কাটী ।

Jálukat gobar pánat mátí.
Kalá pulí rubá tinibár kátí.

Place manure round the black pepper bush
and earth round the pán tree.
And cut the plantain three times before you plant it.

The above proverb gives useful hints as to the cultivation of black chillies, pán, and plantains.

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266. *On cultivating sáli dhán.*

তিনি পৰ্ব্বত ৰুবা সালী ঘন ঘনকৈ দিবা আলী ।
যদি ন হয় সালী তেনে পাৰিবা জবকক গালী ।

Tini parbat rubá shálí ghan ghankoi dibá álí.
Jadi nahay shálí tene páribá jabakak gálí.

Three hills, when you (wish) to plant "sálí,"
you must make the "álís" (divisions between portions of a field)
as near to one another as possible.
If the "sálí" does not grow well, then abuse the rake.

The "álís," which are divisions in the field prepared before the "kathiyá" (seedlings) is planted out, are, for the purpose of damming in the water, which is essential to this crop, and keeping it at a given level. It is a pity nothing is said about the number of times it is necessary to plough the "sálí" field, although I am aware this must depend on circumstances. Mr. Darrah writes "The ruá (*i.e.*, the field where the seedlings are planted out), is usually ploughed some five to eight times. In Sibságar, 8 is the figure given. In Mangaldai 3 to 8. In Tezpur 5. The Barpeta estimate (19) is apparently too high." These different reports from different districts in the Assam Valley are conflicting. Nothing is said in the proverb about using the "moi" or harrow. Probably, in the proverb the rake takes the place of the harrow. On a small piece of ground, a rake would be used instead of a harrow. Even on large fields the rake is used at the corners and other places where the harrow cannot be used. The proverb means that it is necessary to well harrow or rake the field in addition to making "álís."

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267. *Tamarind and "Owtenga."*

খাল দালে তেতেলী পাচ দালে ঔ,
সেই ঘৰৰ মানুহ উঠিলনে নৌ ।

Khál dále tetelí pách dále ó.
Shei gharar mánuh uthilane nó.

A house with a tamarind tree in front and an "owtengá" behind!
Has not the owner of that house gone away from here yet?

নৌ (ad)=নাই হোৱা "nai howa," not yet.

This is a proverb from Gauháti. I know nothing of any such superstition in Sibságar.

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268. *Sesamum.*

মাঁহৰ মাৰ দেখি তিলে বেত মেলিলে ।

Máhar már dekhi tile bet melile.

Seeing the *mátikelái* beaten out, the sesamum opened its cane-fastening.

তিল (til) = sesamum orientale. The proverb is meant as a hit at people who are too officious.

269. *The best crops.*

সহ চিকন পৰৰ, পো চিকন ঘৰৰ ।
Shah chikan parar, po chikan gharar.

The best crops are those growing on the fields of others.
The best sons are those at home.

The above means that people are never satisfied with their own crops, but are envious of those of others. The last part refers to the predilection of the mother for the son, who has not left her for a wife and a home of his own.

Class VI.

PROVERBS RELATING TO CATTLE, ANIMALS, FISH, AND INSECTS.

270. *The paddy-bird and the fish.*

অধিক মাচত বগলি কনা ।
Adhik máchat bagli kaná.

When fish are too plentiful, the paddy-bird is blind,

i.e., the fish are so thick, that he does not know which to catch first, and so, perhaps, all escape him, hence the saying that he is blind.

cf.—অধিক মাচত যুগী আদ বাউল ।
Adhik máchat jugí ád báól.

When fish are too plentiful, a mendicant (*lit.* hermit) becomes half-mad.

যুগী, literally one who carries out the tenets of yoga philosophy, one who cultivates the faculty of attention. Yoga meaning application. Hence the term yogi or jogi is applied to one who gives up the world—a hermit.

বাউল (báól) seems to be connected with বলিয়া (baliyá); the word বাউলী (báóli) often being used as the feminine of বলিয়া (baliyá).

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271. *The jackal.*

আচু কাঠত পৰি শিয়ালটো ৰঙ্গা হল।

Áchu káthat pari shyiálto rangá hal.

The jackal has got coloured red by falling into the dye-pot.

The above means that the jackal only by accident looked a better colour. Hence the proverb is applied to upstarts, who owe their position to some lucky accident.

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272. *The elephant.*

আচলে পিচলে হাতিৰ পাও পিচলে।

Áchale pichale hátir páo pichale.

In a bad place the foot of the elephant even slips.

The proverb is too well known to need comment.

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273. *The mosquito.*

আঠুৱা তলৰ মই মোহাৰিলেয় মৰে।

Áthuwá talar mai mohárileye mare.

The mosquito under the mosquito curtain is killed by being squeezed (this being the usual way of destroying this pest).

The proverb applies to little people who are always subjecting the great to petty annoyances.

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274. *The mosquito.*

শুড আচে হাতি নহয় মানুহ গৰু খাই,
বাগ নহয়, জিটো খাই তাতে খাই,
হৰলক ঘাতে পানিৰ জন্মিত।

Shuṛ áche háti nahay mánuh garu khái,
Bágh nahay, jito khái táte khái,
Haralak gháte pánir janmit.

It has a trunk, but it is not an elephant,
It eats men and cattle, but it is not a tiger.

Whatever it eats, it eats on the spot.
It vanishes with a blast of music. It is born from water.

It is not difficult to guess the answer to this simple Assamese riddle.

275. *The dove and the fish eagle.*

উৰি গল কতিয়া কপৌ খেদি নিলে সেনে,
একো কাঠি কাৰেৰে সাত ঠাইত ভেদিলে,
ইও কথা হৈচে তেনে ।

Uri gal katiyá kapó khedi nile shene,
Eko káthi kárere shát tháit bhedile,
Iyo kathá hoiche tene.

The little dove has flown away being chased by a hawk,
He has pierced it (the latter) in seven places with one arrow only.
This story also is like that.

The above is meant to illustrate the case of a person who tells a story, which *primâ facie* appears to be false. The proverb should more properly have been classed under Class I.

276. *The mouse.*

এটা নিগনিৰ সাত খান পাম ।

Etá niganir shát khán pám.

One mouse has seven "páms."

The word পাম (pám) means a farm, or more commonly a piece of outlying cultivation, which is often situated in the forest or in the midst of thick grass jungle. These páms are liable to the ravages of all sorts of animals, and have to be carefully watched. The proverb means that one mouse in a granary can do an infinity of damage.

277. *The snake.*

এবাৰ সাপে খালে লেজুটো ভয় ।

Ebár shápe khále lejuto bhay.

A man who has once been bitten by a snake, is afraid of every piece of rope.

"Once bitten twice shy."

Also *cf.* a Bihar proverb given by Christian:

Dudhke dahal matha phuk pihi(n).

One scalded by (hot) milk, drinks (cold) buttermilk
even after blowing into it.

The Assamese proverb ought to have appeared under Class II.

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278. *The "Puthi," "Khaljhoná," "Row," and "Baráli" fishes.*

ওচৰৰ পুঠি, খলিহনা, নিলগৰ, ৰৌ, বৰালি ।

Ocharar puthi, khalihaná, nilagar, ró, baráli.

Near us we have the "puthi" and "khalihaná."
The "ró" and "baráli" are far away.

The "Puthi" and "Khalihaná" are small and very inferior fish. The "Ró" and "Baráli," especially the former, are large fish of good flavour.

The proverb is meant to illustrate the saying—"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

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279. *The duck*

কিনা হাঁহৰ ঠোঁতলৈকে মঙহ ।

Kiná há(n)har tho(n)tloike mangah.

The duck that has been bought, has flesh on it right up to the beak.

This means that in the buyer's estimation, such a duck has. As a matter of fact, the duck that is bought in the market, is often lean and skinny.

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280. *The tiger and the deer.*

কালৰ কাল বিপৰিত কাল,
হৰিনাৰ চেলেকে বাঘৰ গাল ।
Kálar kál biparit kál,
Harinár cheleke bághar gál.

What a time! What a time for the opposite to happen!
The deer is licking the tiger's cheek.

281. *The tiger and the tom cat.*

বাঘ চাব নেলাগে বোন্দাকে চোৱা।
ভাল মানুহ চাব লাগিলে আলি বাতলৈ জোৱা ।

Bágh chába nelága bondáke chowá,
Bhál mánuh chába lágile áli bátaloi jowá.

You need not see a tiger, see a tom cat.
If you want to see gentlemen go to the road.

This is perhaps a cynical proverb. It means that a tom cat is quite enough to frighten you, who are talking about experiences with tigers. The allusion to ভাল মানুস (bhál mánush) being seen on the road, is ironical.

282. *The tiger.*

ভাল খাতিলো বাঘক,
পহু মাৰি আনি দিল আগত ।

Bhál khátilo bághak,
Pahu mári áni dila ágat.

I have laid a good bait for the tiger,
By killing a deer and placing it in front of it.

Tigers will sometimes eat animals that they have not killed themselves, but this is not usual. পহু=Beng. পশু। পহু is the common word for a deer in Assamese, not an animal as in Bengali.

283. *"Bhadoi."*

কাকো নেপাই ভাদৈক পালে,
খুচৰি সামৰি খালৈত থলে ।

Káko nepái Bhádoik pále,
Khuchari shámari kháloit thale.

Having got nothing he found a "bhadoi."
And managed to squeeze it into the fish basket.

284. *"Karsola."*

খাই কাৰসলা দালত উঠিল,
কাঠি চেলেকাৰ মৰণ মিলিল ।

Khái kársalá dálat uthil,
Káthi chelekár maran milil.

The kársalá having eaten something (on the trunk)
climbed up into the branches.
The animal that licked the tree met its death.

The "kársalá" is said to be a kind of poisonous snake.

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285. *The dog.*

খুদ মগনীয়াৰ কুকুৰ সত্ৰু।
Khud maganiyár kukur shatru.
The dog is the enemy of the man who begs for scraps.

খুদ is properly rice refuse.

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286. *The ant.*

গুৰি পৰুৱাৰ অলপ বৰখুনেই বান,
সোলা মুখৰ এক চৰেই তান।
Guri paruwár alap barakhunei bán,
Sholá mukhar ek charei tán.
To the ant a few rain drops is a flood.
To the toothless mouth one slap even is hard to bear.

গুৰি পৰুৱাৰ (guri parowár) is a species of tiny ant. In the original Assamese, *for* অলপ বৰখুনেই (alap barakhunei) *read* মুতনিৰেই।

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287. *The weaver bird.*

চৰাই হে সৰু হয় কিন্তু বৰ হোলোং গছত বাহ।
Charái he sharu hay kintu bar holong gachat báh.
The bird indeed is a small one, but it builds its nest in the lofty holong.

The bird referred to is the little weaver bird, which builds its hanging nest on the highest branches of tall trees. The "holong" is a fine tree, and grows with a long straight stem to a considerable height. The "holong" supplies many of the tea boxes of Assam.

288. *The "chital."*

দেখোতেই চিটল পিঠিতে কাঁইট।

Dekhotei chital pithite ka(n)it.

Obviously, a "chital" fish; it has thorns on its back.

The "chital" has peculiar thorny fins, which scratch the hand when the fish is grasped.

289. *The monkey.*

বয়শত বান্দৰো সোন্দৰ।

Bayashat bándaro shondar.

The monkey even looks beautiful when it is full-grown.

290. *The squirrel.*

বাড়িৰ তামোল কেৰকেতুৱাই খাই,
আমাক দিলে জানো অঠলে জাই।

Báṛir tamol kerketuwái khái,
Ámák dile jáno athale jái.

The squirrel eats the widow's betelnut.
If she gave me the tree, I know it would grow crooked.

291. *The "sengeli."*

বুড়াৰ হাতত চেঙ্গেলী।

Buṛár hátat chengelí.

In the hand of the old man is the "chengelí."

The "chengelí" is a kind of small fish found in *bils.* The above means that when a man gets old, the only fish that he can catch is the "chengelí."

292. *Horses.*

ভাল ভাল ঘোড়াই না পাই ঘাঁহ,
বতুৱা ঘোড়াই বিচাৰে মাহ।

Bhál bhál ghoṛái ná pái ghá(n)h,
Batuwá ghoṛái bicháre máh.

Whilst good horses are not getting grass,
The inferior ones are looking for *mátikelái.*

বতুৱা (batuwá) is a term which is applied to horses only, as far as I know. An inferior country "tat" is often called a batuwá ghoṛa. "Mátikelái" = "máti dál," the common pulse of the country, which is often used for feeding cattle on.

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293. *The "kakila."*

মহৰ সিঙ্গত কঁকিলা দাঁৰ।

Mahar shingat ká(n)kilá dá(n)r.

On the horn of the buffalo is the snout of the "kakilá" fish.

The "kakilá" is a long thin fish with a snout, which makes it look very peculiar. The proverb means that the buffalo by habit turns up the earth and mud with its horns in swampy places, where the "kakilá" is met with.

দাঁৰ [da(n)r] is apparently also used to denote the teeth of fish and reptiles.

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294. *The game-cock.*

ৰণৰ কুকুৰা ৰণতে মৰে।

Ranar kúkurá ranate maré.

A game-cock dies in battle.

The practice of cock-fighting prevails all over Assam amongst those who keep fowls. The tea-garden coolies are very fond of it, and often bring cocks with them from long distances for the purpose.

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295. *Elephants and horses.*

ৰজাক চিনিবা দানত,
হাতীক চিনিবা আনত,
ঘোৰাক চিনিবা কানত।

Raják chinibá dánat,
Hátík chinibá ánat,
Ghorák chinibá kánat.

You will be able to recognise a king by his liberality,
An elephant when it belongs to another,
And a horse by its ears.

The second line means that a man does not know how to appreciate a good elephant until he has sold it to some one else.

Good horses are supposed to keep their ears erect.

There is a proverb also in Bengali about being able to recognise a good horse by its ears.

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296. *The house sparrow.*

ৰাজ হংশৰ গতি ধৰোতে
ঘনচিৰি কাৰো খোজ পাহৰিলে ।

Ráj hangshar gati dharote,
Ghanchiri káro khoj páharile.

The house sparrow in trying to imitate the gait of the goose,
Forgot its own.

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297. *The tadpole.*

লালুকলৈ কিতপত পানি লাগিচে ।
Lálukaloi kitapat páni lágiche.

Why does a tadpole require warm water!

cf.—Christian's Bihar proverb :—

"Me(n)rhak ko bhi zokám,
Ya bengo ke sardi."

A frog with a cold or cough!

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298. *The "sal" and the "singi."*

শালাক শিঙিয়ে হাঁহে,
তয়ো এজনি ময়ো এজনি
ভালেটো গৰাকী নাহে ।

Shálák shingiye há(n)he,
Tayo ejani mayo ejani
Bhálto garákí náhe.

The "sál" (fish) is laughing at the "singhi" (fish).
You are a girl and I am a girl,
And no good husband comes for either of us.

Both the "sál" and the "singhi" are classed as unclean fish by Hindus, so that this is a case of "The pot calling the kettle black." This proverb should have been classed under Class I.

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299. *Tigers and snakes.*

সাপে খাই বাঘে খাই জদি মৰে জলে,
জাৰ জি হব লাগে নিজৰ কাৰ্য্যৰ দলে।

Shápe khái bághe khái jadi mare jale,
Jár ji haba láge nijar kạrjyar dale.

Whether a man was bitten by a snake or eaten by a tiger,
or was drowned (it is the same thing).
He has reaped the consequences of his action.

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300. *Dogs.*

কুকুৰক নিদিবা থাই, লৰা চোৱালীক নিদিবা লাই।

Kukurak nidibá thái, lará chowálík nidibá lái.

Don't give a dog a place and do not set a bad
example to children.

The dog being an unclean animal, must not be allowed anywhere where there is a possibility of its defiling any of the cooking or eating or drinking vessels.

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301. *Dogs.*

কুকুৰে জানে কি তাম তুলসি।

Kukure jáne ki tám tulsi.

What does a dog know of the value of copper vessels or of the "tulsi"?

When a Hindu worships his god, he dedicates to him leaves of "tulsi" in a copper vessel. The "tulsi" is the "*Ocymum sanctum,*" or holy basil.

cf.—Bihar proverb : "Can a monkey appreciate ginger" ? also Telegu proverb : "What can a pig do with a rose bottle" ?

DHUBRI, P. R. GURDON.

The 14*th March* 1895.